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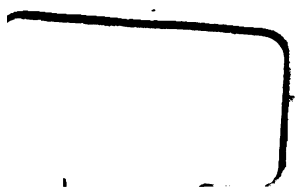
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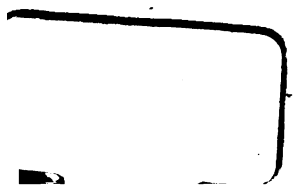
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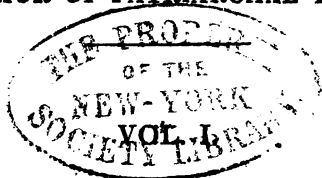
J. C. O'Keefe

ZENOBI^A,
QUEEN OF PALMYRA;

A Narrative,
FOUNDED ON HISTORY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF PATRIARCHAL TIMES.



[Miss Adelaide O'Keefe.]

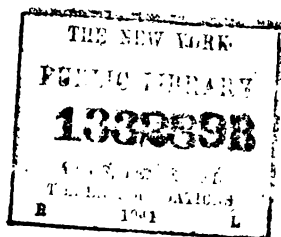
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NEW YORK
SOCIETY
ZENOBIÆ,

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

*The reflections of Orodes, a Senator of Palmyra—
The oracle of Balbec—Odenathus blessing the
infant Zenobia—Septimia's lamentations—The cha-
racter of Elkanah, the Hebrew—The oracle of
Apollo consulted—Youths assemble in the house
of Elkanah—Syrian travellers—Septimia quits
Palmyra, and arrives in Armenia.*

MAN at his birth is feeble and defenceless—he daily improves in strength, in stature, in dignity, and in wisdom, until arrived at the excellency of each, he gradually decays, sinking into a state as weak as at the birth.

Such was the remark of Orodes as walking alone without the ramparts of Palmyra. Again he silently perused an



and wishes rest upon one babe? why, within these few days, is the palace of Antiochus crowded with eager curiosity and anxious enquiries? A birth transcending human expectation could not create a more enthusiastical sensation, and to heathen Palmyra this birth is indeed portentous, for within these six days it was spoken by the oracle of Apollo in Balbec, 'Look to Zenobia, the babe born of Antiochus and Septimia, for her fate and that of Palmyra are one.'

Months glided away, and time only served to strengthen the idolatry of the Palmyrenians, so carefully was the infant watched, and so ardently attended.

Doth it sleep? enquired the father, entering, and gently he raised the transparent veil that fell from the shoulders of Septimia, forming a soft and fragrant tent, under which reposed the fairest babe that the East had ever nourished. Turning, he beckoned to a youth who stood at the threshold with Orodes, and desired him to advance with caution; he did ad-

vance with breathless caution, and when near, he stooped to gaze, and long had gazed in silent awe and rapture, had not Septimia drawn the veil, and snatched the child from his sight.

One more look, exclaimed he—but one.—Away to the chase of the lion, replied Septimia, smiling, nor add thyself to the number of the idle ones who latterly neglect all duty, pleasure, and employment, under the shew of paying homage to my cherub.—O most cruel, to send me to certain death, returned the youth; for with this image before my eyes, can I be on my guard in my encounter of the lion? I am but now arrived from Antioch, sent by our general Balista to hail Palmyra's infant treasure, and here I solemnly pass my word never to rise, until I can tell him that I have held it in my arms.

Comply, Septimia, said Antiochus, for the gallant Odenathus was never known to break his word to a female. The youth kneeling, received on his arms the sleeping babe from those of its mother,

and exclaimed, after a long and anxious look on its uncovered features, May the god of the sun, which hath said that the fate of our nation is entwined with thine, shed on both his purest rays! his blessing be on both, that they may alike increase in beauty, power, and honour:—mayest thou, Zenobia, never forsake his worship, or he deny thee his glorious and benign influence. — Behold that angelic smile passing over the rosy cheek, as if in gratitude.——Take her, take her, Septimia; for should she wake and I meet her look, thou mightst bind me to the cradle, and the wild beasts of Parthia stalk into our streets.

Antiochus listened to the noble youth with the gratified fondness of a father, and Orodes—what were the thoughts at this moment of the subtle, scheming Orodes? Wild and extravagant would they have been deemed if they then had been uttered, yet futurity confirmed them. And did Septimia at heart rejoice? was she flattered by this universal homage?—

Every mother envied Septimia, and Septimia every mother. Though a Hebrew by descent, yet was she and her brother Elkanah born at Selencia on the Tigris. Early in life she became the victim of avaricious parents, who, to secure an illustrious and wealthy alliance, sacrificed her in marriage to paganism and Antiochus: a willing sacrifice, it is true, but not many months had passed ere she discovered that her husband, a strict follower of every civil custom and religious rite, would, on demand, have parted for ever with his wife, and given his children burnt sacrifices to Belus.

Again alone with her maidens and the young child, Valerius, whose pleasure and employment it had long been to attend upon the illustrious infant, Septimia laid her precious burden on a couch, and resigning it to their care, retired into an adjoining recess, sacred to holy meditation, and to the first emotions of grief and joy, ever to be concealed from human eye.

How sad is the conviction that the blessing I so ardently desired shall prove the reverse! I that for so many years with Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah, prayed for the honours of an happy matron, now to be assured that the completion of my wishes will bring to me only sorrow and disaster. That fatal oracle! source of my ruin! what had I done to be thus singled out the wretched victim of ambition, and the dupe of fraud and artifice?

She paused with secret horror, for the voice of conscience answered, Hast thou not become the wife of a pagan?

While my infant remains unconscious of their homage, let them continue it, for now it cannot be injurious to her; but when able to discern the eye of idolatry lifted up to hers, with ears to understand the voice of flattery, she will be rendered early independent, nay, highly exalted above her parents. A new idea suddenly darted into the mind of Septimia, producing the most violent emotion of affright and agony.

O no, she exclaimed, as if the demand had been already made, never, never shall ye deprive me of her, turned adrift like a hireling nurse when the child is weaned ! Is that their policy—the property of the state, and that state heathen ? Until this abhorred oracle had spoken, Antiochus would have permitted me to bring her up in my own faith ; but now, preferring his country and false gods to all my feelings, he may, perhaps must resign her to the authority of the republic, and I become destitute and childless. Raised to a pinnacle of power, perverted, nay, nurtured in the abominations of idolatry, I lose her in this world and the next.

She paused, and wept, and sobbed in bitter anguish ; then, her passions taking a sudden and contrary turn, exclaimed aloud, and with the utmost fervency of voice and action, Gladly would I at this instant resign wealth, name, and friends, all that render life desirable, to enjoy, if only for a few years in its fullest sense, the name of mother. Septimia was

silent.—May I be admitted? enquired a voice from without. She knew the voice; the person was admitted, and the door closed.

The shades of evening deepen and settle in darkness—the watch-word is gone abroad, the centinels are posted, and the signal torches lighted; the streets are gradually forsaken; the lengthened and important consultations of the senate are broken up, and each senator, wrapped in his mantle, goes guarded by his freed-men to his separate abode; the gates and posterns are closed for the night, and Palmyra sleeps in peace.

Would that thy sister's child, this infant Zenobia, had been a male, and born of a Jewish father, said Caleb to Elkanah, as they traversed one of the colonnades leading to the public baths; then our nation might have benefitted by this wondrous enthusiasm which daily encreases throughout the province of Palmyrene:

but a female, and doubtless to be reared a pagan, what can it concern us? Should it even live, long before it arrive at maturity, the Persian foe, though now lulled, may rise and lay these walls in ashes.

Thus Caleb spoke, but vain his expectation of an answer.

And again he remarked, Antiochus a senator it is true, but superior to no other senator—thy sister Septimia noble indeed, but delicately framed, and not young, most unlikely to raise this child to womanhood. Their oracles, continued he, sarcastically, keep the city in perpetual ferment, and who can comprehend or discover what is the secret power by which they are dictated? As I remarked to thee of late, could we but expose the fallacy of these oracles, and thereby prove to the people their own ignorance and credulity, many converts might be gained to our faith.

In appearance, Caleb spoke to vacancy, for his discourse did not seem to make the slightest impression on his

companion, who continued to walk slowly beside him, his hands joined behind him, and his head resting on his breast. Wearied and offended at length by such determined inattention, Caleb quitting him abruptly, turned back to the baths. Thus did these Hebrew friends ever part; yet seldom a day passed without their meeting either purposely or by chance: Elkanah profited thereby, and Caleb found in none so patient a listener as Elkanah.

Was the discourse of Caleb really unattended to by his companion? was this profound apathy sincere? O not a sentence but glided to his mind, and there shaped itself into form. Thus with the apparently negligent and inattentive Elkanah, the opinions of others ever came forth as his own: he was seldom known to question an inferior; he refrained from consultation, never submitted an idea, asked not advice, therefore owed no thanks; all eye, all ear, he servilely adopted, nay, executed the intentions of others, but ever claimed the merit as due

to himself alone. Had Caleb the next day been asked the substance of his discourse with Elkanah when traversing the colonnade, in vain he would have endeavoured to recollect it, whereas Elkanah could have repeated it to a word.

One passion alone to which all others were subservient, occupied the breast of Elkanah; it was a passion he inherited from his father, it appeared in his earliest childhood, became daily stronger in youth, and now absorbed every other. The events which had lately occupied the Palmyrenians, his own affinity to Zenobia their living idol, and the frequent suggestions Caleb had of late impressed upon his mind, now promised the full gratification of every wish.

He had walked far, still meditating, when he found himself at the place he but waited the departure of Caleb to enter—one of the private entrances to the temple of the sun. The door was open, and no one in view. Secretly justifying his going beneath the roofs of the idolater

by the piety of his motive, and its expected good consequences, he crossed the threshold, and pursued his way through many windings, until he reached the spacious and magnificent interior : with awe and admiration at human art, suddenly stepping back still far distant, he raised his eyes, and then first beheld the glorious statue of the god of day : the feet high above the level of Elkanah's head ; the burnished rays surrounding its golden locks almost touching the roof ; one hand grasped the strung bow, and the other was stretched forth as having dismissed the dart of fate.

Elkanah continued to gaze with steadfast wonder upon its majesty, its beauty, colossal size, yet admirable proportion, until attracted by a dark object which appeared on the bosom of the statue : he watched, and saw it move ; it seemed to stop, then quickly glided down the limbs to the pedestal, from which leaping, Elkanah discovered it to be a man, who advanced towards him with a menacing authorita-

live look. By what magic doth Elkanah thus suddenly command attention, inspire respect, and exact obedience? He does but hold up his hand, and instantly the man receives him as one expected. With profound reverence he conducts him to a secret door near the altar of sacrifice. And now, Apollo, what wonders couldst thou not reveal! Thy brazen bosom is now animated by a beating anxious heart.

The day is come, that day so long, so passionately anticipated by Orodes, the crafty statesman, so ardently expected by the credulous people, so desired by the vain Antiochus, so dreaded by the fond Septimia.

The oracle at Balbec was vague and unsatisfactory, for it had not declared whether the fate of their country and of Zenobia would be ruin or prosperity; it had therefore been decreed by the senate, that Apollo should be consulted by the Palmyrenians in Palmyra itself, even in the gorgeous temple of the sun. If the answer should be

unfavourable, prayers were at the same moment to be put up to deprecate the wrath of Apollo; and if propitious, the infant was instantly to be publicly adopted, and reared by the senate in the name of the republic, whose property she was henceforward to be regarded.

Orodes, say, who was it that dictated the oracle of Balbec? who was it that presumptuously usurping divine power, in a few words decided the fate of a nation? Die not now in frenzy on finding thyself outdone, or matched in craft. Elkanah can also bribe priests and priestesses; he likewise can glide into the bosom of the god, and utter prophecies: in the words of Caleb, by taking advantage of the ignorance and credulity of the people, Elkanah also renders himself master of the future.

Ye subtle devisers! Orodes, who seeks to aggrandize Palmyra, and perhaps hereafter govern the ruler, and Elkanah, whose sole intent is to immortalize his own name as the restorer of the Jewish

nation—work on, ye worldly labourers, and worldly wages be your reward: one cometh—but distant is that day—a simple one in outward appearance, whose earthly possessions will be his scrip, his staff, his long loose garment, and his sandals. O ambitious policy! O religious zeal! what at that hour shall be your arms to meet the blaze of truth and revelation?

The interior doors slowly open, and the priestess appears, followed by the principal augurs and aurespices; distant music announces the procession, which enters, preceded by the priests and their attendants. The different altars are kindled; boys and maidens crowned with garlands encompass the victim, a snow-white heifer, and are succeeded by the devout and expecting multitude, who being arranged in companies, the various ceremonies begin.

The victim bleeds, and the fumes of warm blood mingle with rising incense. Silence prevails—the question is proposed to the priestess: expectation rises high;

every heart throbs with painful attention, and not a murmur is heard, until the voice of the god comes forth in thunder—

‘The towers of Palmyra are crowned : the life of Zenobia is glorious, but forsaking my altars, she bows to that of the God of Abraham.’

The solemn pause which followed was broken by one universal sound of horror and dismay, and as if the shadow of death had passed through the dome of the temple, all present fell prostrate on the earth. The next moment three figures appeared at one of the great entrances, the foremost of whom advancing rapidly to the foot of the high pedestal on which the brazen image stood, opened his mourning robes, and dashed from them the dead body of an infant.

Every head was raised, and Antiochus ! was the cry. He looked around—horrible, ghastly was that look ; then, stretching out his arms, Rise not, rise not, rise not—sink into the earth, ye Palmyrenians ; dig your own graves, and plunge

into them—be buried, buried quick: look, there is Zenobia; her fate is death, what then is yours?

He ceased, and every eye was strained convulsively gazing at the object to which he pointed, when Hyrcanius, the high-priest who had but even now caused the words of futurity to be delivered, sternly addressing Antiochus, asked him, did he not dread the vengeance of the deity in thus presuming to falsify the prediction? adding, that since his daughter was to have forsworn her faith, no one could regret her sudden loss.

A boy among the crowd, his name Longinus, remarked, though with singular modesty of speech, Can Zenobia live and yet be dead? can she thus be for ever lost to Palmyra, and yet enjoy therein a glorious existence? Apollo hath declared she shall live, and yet here she lies before us bereaved of life!

The remark was heard and noticed by the whole multitude—Antiochus alone heard it not; in him all the father again

prevailing, he sank upon the steps of the altar: in vain the friends who accompanied him endeavoured to check his emotions before the people; they, moved by generous feelings, soon dispersed, leaving him almost alone to mourn over the breathless remains of infant beauty.

To judge of the heart, inclinations, and favourite pursuits of a child, observe it unseen—observe it among those of its own age: unconstrained by the presence of an elder, it is at once in solitude and in society. This was the custom of Elkanah, that deep searcher into the human mind, that unerring judge of the human heart; regardless of deeds, he ever traced the motive of those deeds to its source, and on that grounded his knowledge of mankind; his masterly skill in discriminating character placed all that moved around him in his power—this power extended its influence to their connections, some near, others distant; and thus did

Elkanah, in appearance a peaceable, inoffensive citizen of Palmyra, become, by means of spies and correspondents, the secret spring of those events, public and private, which agitated the whole Roman empire.

Anticipation of the future was grounded on observation of the present. Elkanah at this period suffered the adult generation to pass away almost unnoticed, for looking forward to the rising of the promised sun of Palmyra, he devoted his whole attention to the younger part of its community.

The future world depend on these, said Elkanah, as passing through the market-place, he saw a group of young ones at play, or stopping under various pretences near the public schools, he listened to the conversation and remarks of the youthful students. When their fathers sleep in the tomb, or, wearied with cares and infirmity, rest in their homes, the world will be left to such ; these will

be heading armies, commanding fleets, and liberating or enslaving nations.

Neither did the little females escape his notice. Among these may be an *Hersilia*—then warring states become allied; a *Lucretia*—kings are banished; an *Octavia* to revenge—an empire is founded; an *Agrippina*—monsters are born; a *Thermuthis* to save a *Moses*; and in one word, an *Eve*.

In the house of *Elkanah* was an apartment to which he frequently retired for study and meditation; for the schemes and politics of *Elkanah* were as secret as they were profound. To this apartment no one had access, excepting *Caleb*, and this from a certain spot overlooked another, in which the children of the principal inhabitants of the city often assembled at his invitation. Their parents wondered that *Elkanah*, childless himself, should thus study the amusement of their young ones; their amusement he thought not of, his whole aim being the

gratification of the one passion of his soul.

As if immortal himself, or capable of endowing others with immortality, Elkanah fixed his mind on a lapse of years; and the intermediate space seemed to him a void in existence; children he regarded not, but in children he beheld future men, and women, moving in the various circles, in which their birth placed them, or to which they were exalted by character and talent.

The young ones being met, and provided with refreshments, musical instruments, books, and other objects of amusement, were ever, by Elkanah's order, left alone, to enjoy for a few hours, their own inclinations at perfect liberty. Happy, thoughtless innocents! they saw not the piercing eye that overlooked them, they knew not that an attentive ear listened to their every word.

Among the number met this day were Valerius and Victorinus, children of two of the noblest senators in Palmyra; Celsus

Meonius, a nephew of Odenathus, who had accompanied his youthful uncle from Antioch; Zabdas, a military student, of obscure parents; Claudian, a noble Roman; a royal Persian named Statirus; and the Athenian boy Longinus.

Why will not Valerius join our sports? enquired Victorinus. Why do his soft eyes fill with tears at my enquiry? and why is he thus deserted?—He hath lost his favourite companion, replied Meonius; the babe of Septimia, with whom he held such delightful conversations, is no more, and for this cause he disdains to join in ours.

The babe, replied Longinus, with a gravity which created a smile in the watchful Elkanah—the babe having no utterance of speech, was incapable of conversing with Valerius. Valerius simply mourns the loss of that beauteous infant, whom the whole province still bewails, and sacred be his sorrow.

Approaching the child, Longinus, with softened voice and tender look, en-

tered with the deepest interest into the cause of his grief, and having at length calmed it, won his consent to join their society. Among these paintings, said he, spreading them on a table, are several Cupids; let us endeavour to seek one resembling the lost babe Zenobia.

Is the soul of that babe in a state of bliss? abruptly enquired the Persian boy.—Most assuredly, replied Victorinus, indignant at the implied doubt.—Then I wish bliss to every babe in Palmyra, retorted the youth.

Thou art for the present nourished in Palmyra, exclaimed Zabdas, turning wrathfully upon him, if without our walls, and I had heard thee express that wish—I prefer my country to thine, interrupted Statirus.—And I mine to Persia, replied Zabdas.—Let us learn to love and respect the country we live in, said Longinus, interfering, regardless to whatever soil we owe our birth.

On what subject dispute ye? demanded Claudian, advancing, Rome is em-

press of the world—I am the only Roman present; ye are therefore all my subjects.—When thus thou boastest, except Palmyra from the world, said Zabdas, the blush of patriotism burning on his cheek, for it never has been overcome, nor ever will be conquered.—The only answer to this remark was loud laughter, until Claudian, emboldened by success, enquired, In what schools hast thou been taught? Even Longinus can find no argument to defend thee.

The noble Zabdas stole a look at the averted countenance of the young Greek, which he perceiving, advanced and took his hand. Be not ashamed, my friend, at thus forgetting or never having heard the misfortunes of thy native city; the school in which thou art studying teaches thee not to pity, but defend her. The history of Palmyra may be comprised in a few words: it was beautified by Solomon the Jewish king, and was successively conquered by Pharoah, Necho, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Macedonian,

and Mark Antony; these were its enemies and pillagers: but to the Roman Emperor Adrian, who turned his triumph to nobler ends, your city owes its present strength and beauty. Thus we see Palmyra hath often been subdued, but the sword of Zabdas may hereafter so prevail, that the last conquest shall remain the last.

Put it to the test, exclaimed Moonius, Zabdas shall represent Palmyra, Claudian, do thou seize one hand—Statirus, sieze the other; if he shake ye off, Palmyra will secure her independance, nay, rival Rome, and never again be subject: let Zabdas but keep firm on the spot where he at this instant stands, until the sun-beam which now shines full on the face of yon statue, pass from it, and if our nation be doomed to fall a prey to either party, let us behold to which is the victim destined.

With all the spirit of their age, the proposal was adopted, and Zabdas, his youthful bosom swelling with patriotic

ardour, while fierce delight blazed in his countenance, stood undauntedly, and suffered his hands to be seized by the Roman and the Persian.

The rest of the assembly retired to a distance, when, on a given signal, the contest began. Of equal years, height, and strength, the struggle was severe: now Statirus appeared to prevail, and now the Roman. The bosoms of the spectators were variously agitated, but none could partake of the feelings of Elkanah.

Moses, when brought before Pharoah, reflected Elkanah, though but three years of age, trampled on the crown of Egypt; Cassius, when seven, struck Sylla for calling his father King of Rome; Cato, at five, braved that death which he welcomed afterwards at Utica.

The trial had continued some time, when Zabdas, by a powerful exertion, drawing his assailants close to his breast, with a sudden spring threw them from him, and they fell—he stood a youthful

Hercules. A general cry of joy succeeded: but the time allotted not being yet elapsed, they started up, and again seized their enemy; he wheeled, he bent, he strained every nerve, and once raised his eyes with agony to the face of the statue from which the sun was fast receding. Longinus, fearful of bodily injury, would have interfered, when checked by Zabdas himself. The struggle continued; Elkanah gazed more intently, and unconscious of his situation, was on the point of exclaiming, Glory to Palmyra! when—O Palmyra! was then thy fate, thus forshorn by a boy?—Ere the sun-beam could leave the cheek of the statue, the strength of Zabdas failed, and he was dragged from Statirus by Claudian, who, in the sudden frenzy of the moment, flung him with violence to the ground, and seemingly bereft of life.

By the care of Longinus and others, Zabdas at length recovered, but never did he lift his eyes from the earth until

rouzed by Meonius, who shouted aloud, Victory ! victory to the Roman !

In an instant Zabdas stood erect, and who that beheld his rapid motion and spirited deportment, could have known he had been severely injured by the fall ?—Is it for thee, demanded he, fiercely, to proclaim the ruin of our country ? Thou, a Palmyrenian, in Palmyra, to exult in her destruction ! My heart to the last was firm, but my strength gave way ; thy strength might have vanquished both these, but thy heart——Meonius, I would not exchange my heart for thine.

The gallant youth thankfully accepted the many hands extended towards him, and those of Claudian and Statirus he grasped with the eager warmth of friendship, then at their request reposed himself, whilst the little hand of Valerius, soft as the down of the dove, tempted him to partake of refreshment.

Longinus, in order to turn their attention from what had passed, spoke of

the late transactions in the Temple of Apollo; but before any of those who had gathered round him could reply, Meonius, with his usual effrontery, broke through their circle, remarking, Longinus is right—who henceforth will put faith in oracles? The child will live, spake the deity, yet there at his feet lay the child dead. To reverse this decree, it may be hereafter told me that my uncle Odenathus is no more, and when preparing to reap my inheritance, he may appear alive before me.

I never anticipate the death of those I love, remarked Valerius.—*Nor I*, returned Meonius. Not one of the youthful assembly could understand the meaning of this reply; but Elkanah did, and from that hour he resolved never, in his future progress through life, to lose sight of Meonius.

Instead of these unseemly contests, said Longinus, would that we had spent the hours in a manner more agreeable to these little ones, and the intentions of the

worthy Elkanah; we have none of us enjoyed this meeting, therefore can never look back upon it with pleasure. The only way to render retrospection delightful is to enjoy the present hour.—Go preach in the prisons of Athens, and to the criminal led to execution, returned the sneering Meonius; go and repeat these words to the childless mother, the ruined merchant, the galley slave, and wounded soldier—bid them enjoy the present hour, and endure the fate of thy philosophy.

There may be truth in thy censure, said Longinus, nay, there is; and yet, not wholly to give up my maxim, I have read that the virtuous have been known to endure torments with patience, and that the injured have suffered without complaining. Meonius, most surely thou hast read the lives of great men written by my ancestor? If thou hast not, I will lend them thee, and also permit thee to see letters of his I have by me to my uncle Fronto. Plutarch was a learned and a just man; his name is honoured

both in Greece and Rome, and thou must confess, not unknown in Syria. The letters I speak of will improve thy mind, and amend thy heart; having read them, thou wilt feel and think as I do.

Never! exclaimed Claudian, boldly—
Never! whispered the timid Valerius—
Never! repeated Elkanah, as he descended from his seat of observation,

The day is far spent, and the women are weary with their journey. Shall we halt at Edessa, or by hastening onward, strive to escape another encounter with these northern robbers, who apparently rise out of the sands to annoy us?

The traveller spake, but his companion made no reply—the wave of his hand was sufficient, and they pursued their journey towards Armenia. Arrived at the foot of Mount Ararat, they the same hour took possession of a dwelling long since prepared. Yet two days more,

and the women and an infant they had in charge alone remained ; their conductors having passed from thence to Antioch, went afterwards to Tarsus, and then rejoined their employers.

The inhabitants of the spot where Sabina, her sister Mariam, and the babe were left, were of a mixed nation, but chiefly emigrated Persians, who, enjoying in abundance all that could render life desirable, looked not beyond their limited horizon. Far detached from the main roads, embosomed in the snowy mountains of Armenia, Zaantha had for nearly a century escaped the notice of contending states, and yet though almost unknown to nations and armies, it had ever been eagerly sought by individuals : those persecuted by religious zeal here found an asylum, and worshipped according to the persuasions of the heart ; the escaped fugitive here took refuge, and breathed security and freedom. Many a sorrowing heart averse to the world, or driven from it, plunged into the solitudes

of Zaantha—many bereaved of every tie on earth, at Zaantha numbered friends at every step: but none here tried to conceal shame, or to extenuate offences; all such were excluded.

During the late wars, when a great extent of country having been depopulated, and many families scattered abroad, several had here taken up their abode; and at this period, when any new settlers arrived, scarcely an enquiry was made concerning their motive for retirement; far from looking on them with distrust or jealousy, the first inhabitants seemed to think their little community thereby strengthened and enriched.

Zaantha was neither a town nor a village, but such a spot as the garden of Eden, not forfeited, might have been to successive generations. The cottages were mostly white, and seemed to have been dropped from the clouds, (whose fleeces they resembled) wherever one spot appeared more commodious or beautiful than another.

Stranger, stand on yon rocky fragment, and thus wrapped in wilds and solitude, dost thou not imagine thyself the only inhabitant of the world? Are solitude and wilds displeasing to thy nature, turn then the projection of the rock, and among a cluster of cottages, surrounded by fathers, children, and grand-children, enjoy thy social wish. A narrow rivulet alone separates the grounds of one neighbour from another, and mutual amity is the common bond of union, and the fence which encircles and secures the whole.

Wouldst wish to penetrate to the abode newly in possession of the Syrian travellers? Follow yon mossy path winding through a grove of olives, and it will terminate in a space surrounded on all sides, this excepted, by high shelving rocks and mossy hills; but, as thou enterest, shrink from the wide sheet of water, which falling from the heights, forms at the opening a liquid door: and now look around, and in admiration gaze upon the

soft green slopes embroidered with plants and flowers of every hue. At the further end behold a retreat such as might have been the choice of Enoch before he exchanged earth for heaven, which entering, bless the kind indulgent hand that hath providently stored it with all that necessity or even luxury can require. The building is of marble, white and unpolished, and though there are many similar in Zaantha, and several superior in size and workmanship, none can compare with this for situation; though seemingly buried among hills and rocks, it enjoys all the advantages of society, and from the eminences surrounding it, beholds the most cheering and extensive prospect.

The sun hath disappeared, and with the setting sun, the inhabitants of Zaantha retire to sleep. Quiet, happy people! a community of harmless and contented swallows, you sink into your nests, nor dream that an eaglet hath this night taken up its abode among you.

Still sorrowful! said Antiochus to Septimia; still rebellious to the gods who, in their wisdom, took what we were not worthy to possess! A year is now passed since that hour of darkness, and yet thy tears still flow. My despair was great from the certainty of never having other offspring, for thus Apollo foretold, but did thy loss exceed mine?—Oh, no! exclaimed Orodes; thy grief surpassed all that even a mother could feel: thy senses were long suspended, thy reason for a time perverted; whilst thy wife, with an heroism which caused Palmyra to wonder, bore her loss with more than Spartan fortitude.

Most true, said Antiochus; and yet had Septimia at that time known what were our expectations and policy, she then could have estimated the bitterness of the disappointment we suffered.—Something of this, replied Septimia, meekly, before I was deprived of my child, did come to my ear, but never was it clearly explained to me.

I no longer, said Antiochus, have any wish to conceal it, as thou hast no longer any motive to dread it:—that taking advantage of the first oracle, our intention was to have educated Zenobia the great supporter of the pagan faith throughout the East, which to our sorrow we see daily undermined by those of the Hebrew and the Christian; moreover, having no male heir, and that infant all to me, I looked to her for the future aggrandizement of my name and family.

And it was my design, added Orodes, and that of many of the senators to whom I had communicated it, to have hereafter made her the means of raising Palmyra to glorious power as a great and independent nation; and herein did we not exalt thee, her mother? Such having been our views, judge now *our* disappointment, and forget thine own.

Septimia sighed—My child a worshipper of heathen gods, and avowedly the tool of ambition! Then I was indeed rightly informed; and from this hour,

my lords, ye shall never again see or hear me mourn the loss of Zenobia.—Zenobia a worshipper of our gods! exclaimed Antiochus, in astonishment; didst thou ever doubt it? Although I permit thee the free exercise of thy Jewish rites, didst thou think I would have suffered my child to have embraced them—suffered her to desert the religion of my ancestors, the faith of Cleopatra, from whom, through me, she was descended?

And what was the character, what the fate of that Cleopatra? asked Septimia, in a trembling voice. Then, after a pause, But, my lord, nurtured in my bosom, could my child have failed imbibing the sentiments of that bosom? When seeing me turn away with abhorrence from idols, would she not also have turned away? When on my knees before the throne of the only one true and living God, what could Zenobia but kneel with me? Studying, as at morn and eve I study the sacred page, my

daughter must have said, Instruct me also in that page, my mother. When repeating the names of—I cannot repeat them now—but would not Zenobia have required an account of such, and on once being told, could she have failed believing? could Zenobia have been of other faith than mine?

Speak on, said Antiochus; his look became cool and deadly, for this was a subject upon which he least could bear to argue. Tenderness for thee made me conceal our purpose until the time for putting it into practice should arrive: the object no more, it would have been useless as well as cruel to have imparted it; but since thou hast braved me to confess—know, that once weaned, Zenobia was no longer thine; the oracle had declared her the property of the state, and the state would have reared her.

Septimia, though this was not unknown to her, looked at Orodes for a confirmation of her husband's words, and he then revealed even more than had ever

reached her ear. All was prepared, said Orodes : women were already engaged, Grecian and Roman women, who were to have reached Syria at an appointed summons ; the new palace of Antiochus, of which the foundation was only then laid, was designed for her ; her education was planned, her studies regulated, paintings and statues ordered to adorn her residence and its gardens, and nothing omitted to aid the accomplishment of our united views.

But, said Septimia to her husband, there are such rites as human sacrifices ; nay, parents have and do still offer their children victims to idols : might not an oracle have commanded thee thus to sacrifice thy daughter ?—And I had obeyed, calmly replied Antiochus.—Thou wouldst not ! exclaimed Septimia, in a voice of smothered agony.—Assuredly I would, was the answer of the pagan.

Septimia laid her hand upon her throbbing heart as pressing it to be calm, and after a short silence, said, with

mournful dignity, Then, my lord, say not again you lament a daughter—'tis not a child you lament, but the extinction of your name. And now I have but one request more to make; I was the mother of thy child, and in the name of that beloved one, I implore thee to grant it:—since her loss, Palmyra, as thou knowest, has been to me a place of torment; suffer me to quit it, and for ever—suffer me to return to Seleucia, my native city, and if such hereafter be my inclination, to linger out life in the spot that gave me birth.

For this Antiochus was not prepared: he expected that her request would have been to erect a monument to their Zenobia, or to rear some magnificent public buildings to her memory, and to both or all he would have readily consented; but—to part for ever! The heart of Antiochus was softer than his words—his speech at times deeply wounded, yet his nature uninfluenced, his soul taken unprepared, was tender as that of a babe.

He stood, struck with surprise and sorrow, but soon, all the native pride of his disposition, roused by the calm indifference or rather hatred her request implied, destroyed the tenderness of the instant, he recovered his self-possession, and Septimia was free to follow her own wishes.

O how great our loss not watching the first emotions of the human countenance! the tongue may deceive, and the eyes gradually learn to conceal the truth, but it breaks forth by surprise. Had Septimia raised her eyes from the ground when she made her request, had she for one moment lifted them to those of her husband, she never had quitted Palmyra; but it was decreed, and three days after——Yet ere she for the last time bade Antiochus farewell, she took from his finger a signet-ring, saying, Promise, O promise by thy altars and thy gods not to wed again without my knowledge; fear not opposition from me, but only consent now to accept my

concurrence to a future union, and this ring be a pledge that I shall at all times, as at this, rejoice in thy happiness.

Antiochus, placing his hand on an altar near which they stood, and raising his eyes in appeal to heaven, prepared to take an oath, but not the oath required ; with as much sincerity as fervour, he solemnly bound himself never again to wed, adding, Change of scene, Septimia, and the society of thy early friends in thy native country may bring peace of mind, there enjoy it until thy heart whisper thee, return ; should that hour ever come, these arms will open to receive thee.

The heart of Septimia at that moment whispered stay, when she felt her hand grasped by her brother Elkanah, and that grasp spake more than words. Antiochus declined leaving the city on account of public duty, but promised ere long to follow her. They bade farewell, and a few minutes after Septimia, ac-

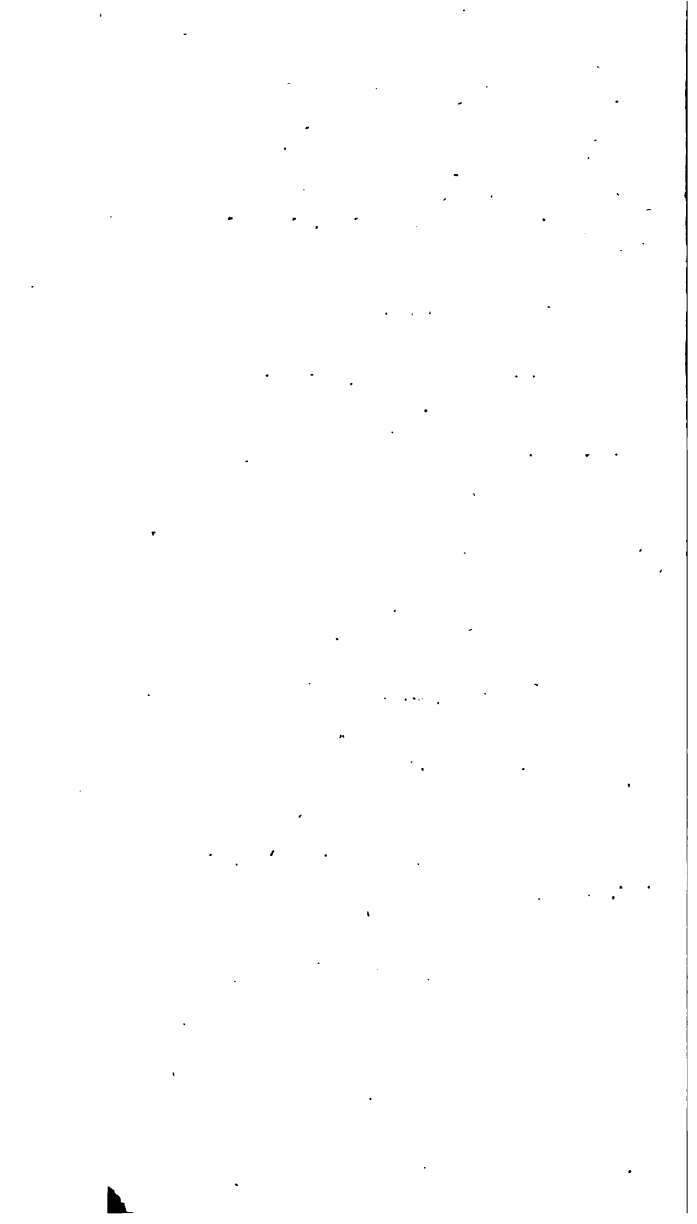
accompanied by her brother, and attended by a numerous train, left Palmyra.

Did Seleucia long sojourn in Seleucia? thither she most certainly went, but not long did she tarry—not long was it before the sword of war fell upon that city, and the Persian flames spreading over the land, consumed the habitations of man, while the conqueror went back to Persia laden with spoils, and girt about with prisoners. Long, however, before Seleucia was visited by this scourge, Septimia had quitted it; could she tarry there, when her heart had been for a year removed far northward? Answer ye mothers, for ye best can tell; say, what were the emotions of this fond one, when in the dead of night leaving the city, attended only by her brother and his faithful guides, she quitted the banks of Euphrates, traversed the deserts of Anthemusia, and arrived at the foot of Mount Ararat in Armenia; a spot where the white cottages seemed to have been

sprinkled from the skies by the hands of angels—a retreat where all was beautiful, rich, calm, and sublime.

Leaving the camels with their servants, she was led by Elkanah through a narrow opening of the mountains, to a mossy path winding through a grove of olives, which suddenly terminated in a space almost surrounded by high hills and shelving rocks, opening at intervals into natural alcoves.

Septimia stepped over the stream that ran across the richly planted garden towards a neighbouring precipice, where, like headstrong youth, it rushed boldly on to its fall, down, far down to the plains below, she approached the beautiful habitation in the centre, on which the moon-beam fell, and entering, caught from the arms of Sabina, her own living, beloved Zenobia.



ZENOBIA,

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Condition of the youths when grown to manhood—Description of Zenobia—Elkanah arrives in Armenia—The tomb of Gordian—They leave Zantha and travel southward—Nineveh—Babylon—The Arabs—They journey through the desert—Zenobia's first sight of Palmyra—They enter the city at night—Meeting of the senate, priests, and vestals—Zenobia acknowledged.

MINUTES linger, hours are tedious, yet years fly.—But a few years, and behold the change in condition in the youthful company assembled at the house of Elkanah, himself alone unchanged: Zabdas, the gallant patriot boy, now next to Odenathus the best defender of his country; Claudian, a commander in the

Roman army in Gaul ; the royal Persian living at Ecbatana, daily strengthening the hatred and envy Persia ever bore Palmyra ; Longinus, the esteemed, the learned, the courted and beloved ! and Meonius, the same sarcastic scoffer as when young, now grown to manhood, rich in the gifts of nature, debased in mental properties, for to his ill qualities is now added personal jealousy of his little kinsman Herodian, the lovely child of Odenathus, by whose birth he is no longer his uncle's heir.

Though all had dispersed according to their several views in life, yet had not one been lost to the watchful eye of Elkanah.—And the time is approaching when I must employ my tools, said Elkanah, as he opened a book in which he had enrolled their names, ages, dispositions, country, and character ; these are good instruments : at that time newly formed, now about to be taken in hand ; different instruments for their several purposes ; some to cement nations, others to

divide ; one to pare away superfluous matter, another to amend, polish, smooth ; refine ; this will strike boldly to the core : that insidiously wind its way ; some are edgeless, but driven by these—— they are good tools, said Elkanah, as he closed the book, and the workman must betake himself to his labour.

In the agony of her heart, Septimia had preferred a prayer to heaven, and heaven had granted it. Gladly, exclaimed Septimia aloud, would I renounce friends, name, and fortune, to enjoy the name of mother. Elkanah overheard the words, and on entering his sister's room said, Enjoy thy wish ! then to her utter amazement and horror revealed the decree passed the same hour in the senate, the truth of which Antiochus and Orodes had since confirmed.

To appearance Elkanah only befriended a helpless relative, by securing to her the natural rights of a mother, his deeper views lay concealed from every eye, even from those of Caleb, whose

assistance he had found indispensable. Caleb approved of the motive assigned, and looked no further; the substitution of a dead child for the living Zenobia was invented by him, and executed by Elkanah.

The subsequent ruin of Seleucia crowned their schemes with certain success, for the report of Septimia having fallen a victim with her family, in the general massacre, soon reached Palmyra; and thus were the fondest wishes of this tender pious mother fulfilled: she was (under a feigned name) dead to all the world but her child, and unconscious as that child of the deep snare Elkanah had spread for both, she rested in full security here to live and die. Since their re-union, she had not separated herself one instant from Zenobia—Zenobia slept with her, fed from her hand, listened to her every word, walked with her, and sighed, smiled, and wept, if her mother wept, or smiled, or sighed.

I taught her lips to pray, said Sep-

timia, I enjoyed with exquisite jealousy the dawn of reason : her first lisp, her first look of intelligence were not thrown away upon strangers and indifference, but are engraven on my memory.—She learned the name of mother from me ; I am all to her, she all to this doating heart.—O thou, my God, who hast thus secured to me this thy blessed gift, who tearing her from the hands of idolatry and worldly greatness, hast permitted me to bring her up in the knowledge of thee, hear and grant my prayer—never to let me know her loss—to die in her arms is all I ask, to die—enfolded thus : for the little hands of Zenobia were instantly clasped around her neck.—And I, exclaimed the child, have but one wish—Oh, never let me be parted from my mother ; all I ask is to die in her arms—nay, my mother, can we not die together, thus enfolded ?

Zenobia had reached her twelfth year, and throughout the East, for stature, loveliness, and mental acquirements, there was not her equal. Wild as the air which she enhaled, submissive only to her mother, whose look was her guide, whose smile or kiss her most coveted reward, whose frown (a storm in summer), melted her to penitence and tears. Flying from secret or familiar conversation with the youth of this heavenly spot ; haughty and arrogant with the presumptuous ; courteous to the humble, a just arbitress in all disputes, carrying burdens for the helpless, nursing infancy, assisting childhood, a staff to old age ; noble, beautiful, healthy, of majestic shape, yet perfect symmetry ; her hair a glossy black, her dark eyes soft, yet sparkling ; her complexion delicately fair, except when the varying roses blushed upon her cheek, and their buds disclosed themselves upon her lip ; her voice clear and harmonious, her mein pre-eminent. Such at this period was

Zenobia, and such with little variation did she remain to the hour of her death.

From Sabina and Mariam she had learned every useful and ornamental work befitting her sex and birth, and from Septimia, aided by Artabazus an Armenian Sage, the more refined and elegant acquirements of the mind. As it was the intention and hope of Septimia, that Zenobia should here pass her days in happy obscurity, she at first confined her instructions to such things only as might serve to render retirement happy. Early initiated in religious principles, the sacred historians and prophets were familiar to her, and she was mistress of the Syrian, Hebrew, and Roman languages in their purest style ; to these were added music and painting, in which sciences Septimia was perfect ; but all these gained with the utmost facility, a void ensued, and Zenobia asked, is this the end of knowledge ? is there any art or language consistent with female propriety to be learned that is still unknown to me ? You ever

distinguish this book by the name of sacred, that implies there are others which are not so. Has not every nation an historian as well as the Jewish? throughout the Bible are interspersed mention of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Medes, and Persians; have they no records, no biography? have the Jews alone collected thus their history from the creation of the world to the time of the Maccabees?

Septimia thus questioned, fully satisfied her daughter's enquiries, and this led to requests, daily and urgently repeated, which she could no longer defer granting; moreover Artabazus reminded her that compliance was indispensable, for that such was the nature of Zenobia's mind, ardent and restless, nothing but a constant supply of wholesome mental food could keep it pure.

Elkanah had never missed his yearly secret visit, and this year Septimia having consulted him on the propriety of yielding to Zenobia's wish, a few weeks after

a treasure of scarce and valuable manuscripts arrived.

Ere Zenobia had reached her sixteenth year, there was not a nation throughout the known world that she knew not its rise and progress, its internal and external policy, the customs and disposition of its inhabitants. Joined to these improvements of the mind and taste, were various bodily exercises, such as her peculiar mode of life and the manners of that country permitted. Rambling to the summit of Mount Ararat, in search of shells, plants, and other prized productions of nature, was her most favourite amusement. She was expert in archery, in riding, and in hunting, but her arrows were only directed at the fruit in her garden; her excursions were on a beauteous palfrey round and across the valley near their dwelling, and her hunting consisted in the harmless chase of the orange starling, the hare, and crested kingfisher.

The day was at length come.—A deep

depression hangs upon my heart, said Septimia on the morning of that day, which in vain I endeavour to shake off; this day my Zenobia numbers sixteen years, on this day I expect my brother's annual visit—all promises fair, yet heaviness and sorrow hang upon me...

The women were preparing for the arrival of Elkanah: Artabazus was absent, and Septimia, after many fruitless attempts to pursue her usual morning employments, resumed the work she had begun the day before, a silken net to confine the flowing locks of her child. She had not long been thus engaged when Zenobia entered; gently laying aside her bow and quiver, she sat down on the ground, and without speaking, joined her hands and rested her cheek on the knee of her mother.

Stealing a look downward, Septimia perceived that something had discomposed her, yet long continued her work in silence, then began a favourite song which gradually became a sweet and

plaintive, distant; again looking upon the lovely face reclined on her knee, she saw it bathed in tears—the song ceased, and for some time both remained silent.

I will exchange that Thracian horse, and without delay, remarked Zenobia abruptly, for he no longer pleases me. This was an observation that required no reply, and Septimia made none.—Thou didst promise to send for materials for embroidery from Tyre, hast thou my mother? This speech required an answer, and Septimia simply replied that she had not yet.—Instead of sending, why should we not go thither? I am in want of shuttles, and needles, and stained wool, and various articles of work, for I will read no more.—Another pause ensued.

Books no longer interest, unless I could see the countries they describe, witness the actions they detail, mingle with such as write them—I was not born in Armenia, full well I know—was I born at Tyre?—where was I born, my

mother!—South of the Euphrates, replied Septimia.—The stars will guide me.—Zenobia!—At that exclamation Zenobia looked up, and the next moment was locked in the arms of her mother.

Yes, she added, the stars will guide me, when inclined to forsake thee—but, my mother, Oh, in pity, for the future keep all books but one far from me: no longer do I find them a faithful picture of mankind; I see no women here resembling thee, either in person, mind, or voice; I see no man I would wish to call father; I long to mingle with such as ourselves.—Thou sayest right, my child, replied Septimia, sighing; our retreat can indeed give thee no idea of the busy world: here are neither crimes nor passions, war, dissensions, nor misery; here, life is called happiness, and death is named sleep. But what reference have these reflections to thy once favourite palfrey, so small, so glossy, and so gentle; how has he incurred thy displeasure?

By ever turning south of the Eu-

phrates, replied Zenobia, fixing her penetrating eyes on those of her mother ; never does he attempt to carry me by force either north, east or westward, but perpetually turns towards the road leading south ; surely instinct makes him restless to go back to his native fields. It cannot be, my love, interrupted Septimia ; then addressing the women, she enquired was not the horse of Thracian breed.

No, replied Sabina and hesitated, but being commanded by Zenobia with unusual authority to declare whence it came, added, When purchased, the owner indeed brought it from Thrace, but it was bred in the plains of Palmyra. Palmyra ! exclaimed Zenobia, in Coelosyria ? divided from us only by mountains and the Euphrates ? then the mystery is explained, and now when inclined to visit that renowned city of the South, I have only to lay the reins on my courser's neck.

She gave not one glance at her mo-

ther's countenance, but seizing her bow, fitted an arrow to the string, and both were in an instant out of sight.

Long, very long ere Septimia recovered from the surprise and deep dejection these words occasioned. The day I have so often fearfully anticipated is at length arrived! she will quit this solitude, or compelled to stay, it will become hateful to her; would that I had followed my own will, regardless of that of my brother, then would she have still been ignorant that any other world than this were in existence!

The arrival of Elkanah served only to heighten the bitterness of these reflections, for instead of trying to allay the fears of Septimia, he artfully confirmed them; unwilling longer to indulge her lamentations, which gradually increased, he enquired for Zenobia, remarking that doubtless the last year had given the final polish to both mind and person, and they together went forth to seek her.

They sought her in the garden; and in the plantation at the foot of the platform, on which the dwelling was erected, but sought in vain; they then repaired to the different recesses, bowers, and alcoves, with which the domain abounded, but no Zenobia was to be found. Nay, call not aloud on her name, said Elkanah; wherever she is, we will take her by surprise; and they examined separately every arbour and retreat.

All these, remarked Septimia, are the work of her hands, thus fitted up in a variety of style as taste and convenience have suggested. This is her study—behold how artfully concealed among the rocks; not a sound can here disturb meditation, not a footstep approach unheard. These hanging curtains of ivy, thus seemingly disposed by the hand of nature, were arranged by the hand of my child. Elkanah entered, and cast his eyes around on the different articles spread over the table, couch, and shelves, which were cut into the solid rock; here were her books,

her materials for writing, and scattered pages, which he attentively examining, perceived were extracts from various authors.

From thence they passed to another recess.—How enchanting the sound of Zenobia's lyre and voice, when here she plays and warbles the hymns of praise I taught her! To this retreat we often retire from the meridian sun; here, where not a ray can penetrate, and often, lulled by this gently-falling water, I close my eyes in sleep in her arms. In yonder bower, gathering in its bosom the rays of the sun, we seek heat when chilled by the keen mountain air—that bower of sweets! wherein every flower that blooms was planted by her. She had but to speak, and Nature fulfilled her every wish. Oh, my brother! how, O how can I chase away this sudden gloom of discontent, and restore to her lovely countenance its native serenity and grace?

Thou hast suffered her to mingle with the inhabitants of this village, replied Eliknah, contrary to my express advice

and command?—Far, far from it, returned Septimia, eagerly; never has she been from my presence, and for the last three years, has not exchanged one word beyond these walls, except with the aged Artabazus; Sabina and Mariam I trust equally with myself. No, it is books, and books alone have wrought this change. And yet to have nurtured her in ignorance, what would have been my self-reproach! Why then do I thus ever regret encouraging her increase of knowledge, when conscious that the sacred page alone cherished that soaring spirit which nothing now can repress? Scarcely had she numbered five years, when, reading to her that sacred page, she exclaimed, clasping my hand, Should Jerusalem be ever threatened by an Holofernes, my mother, I will be a Judith.

Oh, Septimia! credulous and open-hearted, dost not perceive the effect of these thy words on thy subtle brother? Why does he pass his hand to his face, and stop and turn to gather a wild flower

by the way, but to conceal the emotions to which thy speech has given rise?

Still they walked on, and Septimia at every moment stopped to explain the cause of the various improvements Elkanah remarked had been made around her abode during the last year.—I once complained of fatigue on this very spot, and the next time we walked this way, Repose thyself, my mother, here is a seat, whispered the dear one. We stopped at this entrance to yon thick coppice—(there was no entrance then,) how delightful, I remarked, would be a walk in yonder shade! but the way to it is choked with briars and thorns, and the path too far for me to reach. I came that way again, when Zenobia smiling, asked, Where are now the thorns and briars, my mother?—How grateful would be to me some sort of fruit at this instant, distressed with heat and thirst, said I one morn, and how improvident in me not to prepare better for our destined summer rambles! Never from that hour was the arm of Zenobia

unincumbered with a basket of refreshment. Often, my brother, have I checked my wishes in her hearing, fearful of giving trouble to this beloved child, whose study, for the last ten years, has been my comfort and happiness.

Elkanah listened, and each word but served to confirm, that every hope however high his politic heart could form, would be amply gratified.

Still they sought Zenobia, but long sought in vain, until Septimia saw an arrow at her feet, which she knew to be hers; another, at a little distance, guided them, and they successively found her bow, quiver, and turban. They continued to walk in silence, nor stopped until within sight of a small grove of turpentine, in the centre of which was the tomb of Gordian, one of the many erected to his deified memory the whole extent of the Tigris and Euphrates; there, half leaning over it, her face downwards, her long black hair waving in the wind, they beheld Zenobia.

Septimia would have rushed forward, but Elkanah withheld her, and they stood contemplating the sight before them. Behold, said he, and let this be an answer to thy complaints; behold, and be convinced that nature cannot be suppressed. This youthful being, nursed in the most profound solitude, ignorant of towns, cities, armies, and states, led only by books and instinct, shunning the society of the humble and obscure to court the memory of the illustrious dead!

They advanced unheard to the tomb, and saw at the foot of it, a book which had fallen from the hand of Zenobia. Elkanah took it up; it was a Latin historian, and that part relating to the murder of the Emperor Gordian was wet with tears: he shewed it in silence to Septimia, who, approaching, whispered gently, Is not the bosom of a mother a better pillow than the cold tomb of a stranger? Zenobia slowly raised herself. Is not this, my child, a more welcome pillow for thy aching head; thy aching

heart, alas? Here then repose, and whilst thus reposing, only whisper to me what can restore thy peace, and it shall be restored.—Behold thine uncle.

Elkanah, without appearing to notice either, continued to turn over the leaves of the book. I now see, he observed, the similitude that my niece hath found between Gordian and herself: on this day sixteen years was Gordian murdered (far to the south, near Zaïta, where his remains were really interred, this monument being only to his memory), and on this day sixteen years was Zenobia born.

This remark struck cold to the heart of Septimia, who looking resentfully at the book which Elkanah still held, said, But for those ill-written pages, my child might now have been weaving birth-day garlands for her hair, instead of weeping over the tomb of a Roman emperor.—And could the historian foresee, asked Elkanah, that such would be the consequences of his ill-written pages? Blame not the writer, but his reader, in thus

suffering herself to be swayed by every burst of passion. What connection in the fate of Gordian with hers?—I know not wherefore, replied Zenobia, but in the fate of Gordian, I feel as if I wept that of a brother; and yet he was a Roman, and Rome has ever been the avowed enemy and persecutor of our faith. From the reign of Vespasian downward, what has not our nation suffered from persecuting Rome!

Elkanah listened, and every word was impressed upon his heart. Dost wish to quit Armenia? demanded he, gently.—No, she replied; but I want more Septimias, more Zenobias.—Of such as my sister thou wilt find abundance in the world, but another Zenobia, never.

On their return to the house, by Septimia's desire Zenobia left her alone with Elkanah, and joined their women, whom she assisted in the preparations making for her uncle, as he had promised to remain with them yet two days. It was long, very long before Zenobia was

summoned, and when she did enter, followed by Sabina carrying the simple repast, she was struck with consternation on beholding the change in her mother's countenance; incapable of suppressing her emotions, she eagerly enquired the cause, and was answered in a low voice that she should know all when they retired to their apartments for the night.

With uncourteous haste Zenobia hurried the repast, and that over, tenderly forced her mother to withdraw: the agitation of Septimia each moment encreasing, rendered it at length necessary, yet when alone, tears were all the answer she could give, and Zenobia, now no longer impatient, stood before her pale and trembling, fearing she knew not what: but when, a few minutes after, Septimia with broken sighs informed her, that in two days they were, under the protection of Elkanah, to travel through Mesopotamia, Arabia, Judea, and Syria, nor return to Armenia under some months, the rapture that seized

upon her youthful heart deprived her of all utterance.

Septimia looked up, and then could first judge what had been the restraint and self-denial of Zenobia, in submitting to perpetual seclusion without a murmur. Thou wilt not, my child; thou wilt not forsake me? at the expiration of that time nothing shall prevent my return hither, thou wouldst not wish in a few weeks after to come and erect my tomb beside that of Gordian? The look and action of Zenobia were sufficient answers, and for a time calmed the terrors of this tender mother.

On her eagerly enquiring what preparations were necessary, Septimia answered that every thing was already provided by Elkanah; all that he requires of thee is to devote thy whole time and attention to him for the two next days; in his idea, the best confirmation of the truth of history is to visit the spot where each event took place, and in order to refresh thy memory, he wishes thee to

peruse with him certain portions of the pentateuch, the sacred historians, and the prophets.

I approve of his idea and intentions, said Zenobia, with respect to the journey, but decline his assisting me in a review of the scriptures as unnecessary ; his observations must either confirm your instructions, (and that is not wanting,) or refute them, and then—nay, my mother, do not smile, my uncle said I should find no other Zenobia in the world, I could have answered, never may I meet another Elkanah.

As a rebuke must have followed, Septimia avoided noticing her words, for hardly could she blame Zenobia, such the cold repulsive manners of Elkanah, who though in appearance inattentive to all around him, yet as Zenobia had observed, never suffered a word, a look, an action to escape him.

Do thou, my child, continued Septimia, endeavour to profit by this journey as thy uncle wishes, whilst my only view

shall be a look forward to our return, my only care to collect whatever may serve to decorate and render more convenient this our loved retreat. I have never, as thou knowest, concealed from thee that great wealth is mine, restrain not then either thy charity or inclinations, but in our way, whatever thy heart prompts thee to perform, or thy eye covets, but name to me thy desire. A few months expired, we will return, a happy pair after a short flight, to our blessed abode, then greatly endeared by temporary absence; thy mind enlarged, thy knowledge encreased, thy religion confirmed, and taste improved: our establishment here shall then be more extensive, and our dwelling and its domain boast of every ornament that art and industry can furnish; all the return for my affection will be amply repaid when thou, my love, shalt exclaim, 'Let us now, my mother, go back to Zaantha.'

Noble, worthy Septimia! take thy last look of Zaantha—yea, stop to inhale

with delight its delicious air, for never again wilt thou inhale it; treasure well those roses thou art gathering to adorn thy travelling litter, for they are the last thy hand shalt gather; listen to the song of that bird, thy favourite songster, nay linger behind to catch its falling note, for thou wilt hear its note no more!

Sabina was left behind, her younger sister alone accompanying Septimia and her daughter, the faithful Mariam, whom both delighted to question and instruct. Near the banks of the Arbonis, Elkanah was joined by Caleb and his train, and in silence gloomy and preconcerted the journey was begun. The litters in which the females travelled, were flanked by Elkanah and his friend, before and behind whom rode a chosen well-armed band of guides and associates.

Is thy sister acquainted with the dreadful news? demanded Caleb; how didst thou prevail on her to quit Zaantha? is she already informed of thy intentions? Not one of these questions

was Elkanah inclined to satisfy, he therefore took out his tablets and appeared to be writing. I would advise a halt at Ballatha, continued Caleb, and the next day for us to continue the course of the Arboris, nor cross Euphrates until near Zaragarda, thus perchance we may shun both Roman and Persian foe. Not a word did Elkanah vouchsafe to reply, so intent was he upon his tablets, yet by his command they halted the same night at Ballatha, and the next morning as he directed journeyed on, still keeping the windings of the Arboris.

The mind of Zenobia had resumed its usual calmness and dignity; now in the full enjoyment of all her wishes, she was affectionate and satisfied; the face of the country, as it assumed a variety of forms and hues, greatly interested her; the passing travellers, companies of merchants, bodies of horse, and boats upon the river, all increased her curiosity and pleasure; yet retaining admirable self-possession, none who beheld her could

have judged that she had never been an hour's journey from the solitudes of Zaantha.

Shall we not visit the head of the Persian Gulf? asked Zenobia; that part of the land between Euphrates and Tigris, described by our great and inspired law-giver and historian as the site of Paradise?

How canst thou be certain, asked Mariam, that that was the spot, more than any other?—Supposing, replied Zenobia, that we being questioned whence we came, were to say from Zaantha, a village buried among the woods in the mountains of Armenia, near the western source of a river which falls into the Tigris, and that the reply was, How can ye be certain that that spot is Zaantha more than any other?—Moses was not cotemporary with Adam, said Mariam, smiling.—No; but depending on our veracity, represent to yourself your children describing to theirs the situation of our abode, and they again to their posterity, could the truth be

fairly doubted?—This is only tradition, Zenobia.—Nay then, she answered, we are authorised to believe that Paradise was thus situated both by tradition and scripture. Hath not Moses as accurately described Eden as we can Zaantha? Adam, as we well know from tradition, lingered for ages near the spot he had forfeited, and it was pointed out from father to son; had Moses been left to choice, he might have been inclined to place it in Canaan, to gratify the Israelites, by making it an additional motive to conquer that land.

Mariam felt convinced, and Septimia continued, To the summit of Mount Ararat, on which the ark of Noah rested when the waters abated, we have often ascended; the third local point of consequence is that of the tower of Babel, built to escape a second deluge, consequently since that period and which as, we shall find still stands.—Had there been no deluge, remarked Zenobia, there might still exist the remains of Paradise,

every vestige of which that flood perhaps has swept away.—The idea is natural and probable, replied Septimia, but having no certain ground in holy writ, it must rest upon conjecture.

As they approached the Tigris and the site of antient Nineveh, Zenobia, turning eastward, laid her hand on the open leaf of Isaiah, and in a low and impressive tone of voice, repeated his prophecies relating to the destruction of the kingdom of Assyria.

Septimia listened, and sighed with calm delight as she gazed upon the lovely moralist, who, closing the book, addressed her, saying, Oh, my mother! what language can equal this? How insignificant compared with him, appear the most illustrious poets of Greece and Rome? Isaiah! at once poet, prophet, divine, and historian. When we shall arrive at the spot where now stands the great Tower, and that where once stood Babylon, I would wish to quit the litter.

They did so, and Zenobia visited the

interesting remains of Babel, and wandered among the cypress groves upon the banks of the Euphrates : as she stood at the edge of the river, leaning on a rock, she again referred to the sacred predictions ; and when she had concluded, a loose fragment from the rock on which she leaned, falling accidentally into the river, she added, Thus hath sunk Babylon, never to rise ; the place is cut off, nor man nor beast remain, but desolation ever !

They had journeyed many weeks, when Septimia, to Zenobia's enquiry of whither would they next bend their course, replied, As I understand, westward, towards Judea, which thy uncle intends us to traverse throughout, and return, by the way of Phœnicia and Upper Syria, to our beloved Armenia. She watched the countenance of Zenobia to perceive what would be her emotion at the mention of return, and to her surprise and satisfaction, distinguished therein unaffected pleasure.

O that we had brought with us a carrier dove, that when at Edessa, I might have said, Fly homeward to Sabina, and prepare our welcome!—And not one pang at retiring for ever to solitude? enquired Septimia.—Not one, my mother: to gratify my wishes, and contribute to my improvement, thou hast sacrificed many days of ease and quiet, and now be my life short or lengthened, it shall ever be devoted to thee.—My own beloved one! said Septimia, but be not deceived; I did not seek to gratify thy desire of travel, but was compelled to yield to thy uncle's command: had thy future welfare depended on me, Zenobia, thou hadst never quitted Armenia.

Having crossed the Euphrates, Septimia became more cheerful, conscious that though the journey would yet last a considerable time, every step ere long would be a step nearer home.

There were many places and cities Zenobia expressed a wish to visit, but was permitted to see only those Elkanah

had previously appointed—remonstrances were fruitless; for though Elkanah hesitated not at times to converse with his sister and Mariam, in order to beguile the way, on finding that Zenobia would never suffer him to evade her questions, he seldom answered her.

Passing through Chaldea, they entered upon Arabia Deserta, and Zenobia, well skilled in astronomy, watched the course of the heavenly bodies, night and day, with intense interest. Septimia, often leaving her litter, would walk supported by Mariam, whilst Zenobia strolled apart, gathering for her flowers and plants, or brought her water from every newly-discovered spring, or supplied her with fruits and other refreshment. The journey of life and the journey through Arabia are the same to thee, my child, and I see where'er I am, thou art resolved to prepare against my wants.—And is not this journey through Arabia part of the journey through life, my mother?

The first month was nearly expired, when one night, roused by the sudden and violent motion of the litter, Zenobia awoke, and holding back the curtain of the window, looked out to discover what had occasioned it. The moon was brilliant, and the air sharp; the face of the country appeared to her much changed since she had closed her eyes: the rich luxuriant plains she had gazed on at sunset, were now replaced by a sterile naked waste; at every step verdure became more scanty, and trees less frequent; barren rocks now reared their heads, and trees, shrubs, and herbage gradually receded, giving at length place to one entire extensive bed of sand, only diversified by little hillocks of the same, or rude and rugged heaps of stones, or shining rocks of adamant. The feet of the camels and horses seemed to plunge deep in sand at every step; encouraged by the songs of their keepers, they however travelled onward, whilst the men who carried the litters, frequently stopped

through weariness and exertion. Zenobia heard a camel-driver ask another whether the water-skins had been filled at the last well,—and the answer was given in a sullen and reluctant tone of voice.

Zenobia let fall the curtain, and looked upon her sleeping mother. Her face naturally pale, was rendered paler by fatigue and the light of the moon which fell upon it. Zenobia gently felt her cheek, and then her hand. This journey hath been above her strength, and at her age, her health tender and delicate—exertions like these suit only such as me. Thou most beloved! if ever from this hour thou seest me shed one tear of regret, hearest one sigh, one repining murmur at my fate, withdraw from me my greatest earthly blessing—thy love. From this moment I consecrate my life to thee—once more at Zaantha neither the allurements of the world, nor any temptation whatsoever, shall win me from thy arms. Never will I leave thy side, but to the last moment

of existence be thy friend, thy nurse, thy guardian, thy daughter. Septimia heard not the plaintive words, she felt not the pious kiss, and yet a faint smile passed over her cheek, which as quickly vanished.

Zenobia again unclosing the curtain, looked around, and beheld with surprise and dismay that they seemed to be on an ocean of sand. As far as the eye could distinguish, and the moon was bright and unclouded, not a single object appeared on the surface of one broad immensity of sand. She looked to the starry firmament, and her dismay increased on discovering that their track was no longer due west, but that within a few hours it had changed to one directly north.

Instantly bending forward from the litter, she called to the men who bore it, and desiring them to stop, enquired for their master. His litter is far behind, they replied. Then proceed not a step until he reach ours. The men obeyed, and Elkanah and Caleb soon overtaking her, she explained her feelings. Alarm

not thy mother, said Elkanah, but wait with patience until the morning, when all shall be revealed. Recollect, added Caleb, that two days back, my lord received dispatches from the Roman Pro-consul in Judea. They confirm the intelligence he before heard of a dreadful calamity having fallen on the empire; and it is this that has occasioned the sudden change in our destination; but be calm, and ere the rising of to-morrow's sun, thy mother will know all. Proceed, cried Elkanah to the men.

Stir not a step, exclaimed Zenobia, raising her voice. Then gently awaking Septimia, she said, Here is thy brother to acquaint thee that a sudden and unforeseen calamity having fallen on the Roman empire, we are prevented from continuing our journey to Judea,—we are at this instant travelling northward, and in the midst of an immeasurable desert.

Septimia's looks filled with fear and wonder, seemed to ask Elkanah, was this true?—but he was silent. We wished

not to have disturbed thy rest, said Calab, but since it can no longer be concealed, the barbarous nations at war with Rome are every where taking advantage of this dire event. What, what event? demanded Septimia. Thou wilt know to-morrow, returned Elkanah,—but confide in me, my sister. The Persian forces overrun the country,—no spot is secure,—and even now the village of Zaantha may be in flames,—your retreat to Armenia is cut off, and no security is to be met with in Judea, or any other Roman province.

Whither then are we going? asked Zenobia: for Septimia, more experienced than her daughter in these sudden and violent convulsions of empires, partly guessing the sad truth, found no words to express her grief and terror. Whither are we going? again Zenobia demanded. I repeat, to-morrow's sun will inform thy mother, replied Elkanah haughtily, for her distrust had embittered his mind, and given birth to doubts, whether she would really prove the passive tool he had so

many years hoped to find her. Whilst my mother was absent, said Zenobia, (and sleep and absence are the same,) I acted for her; now that she is present, I submit to her judgment.

Septimia leaned out at the window to speak to her brother, but he having proceeded forward, she again seated herself, and watched their progress in silence. Hours passed on—the sun rose, yet no fourth object appeared, except their own company; all they could discern was sand, sun, and firmament.

In the morning, wearied with the confinement of the litter, they left it, and walked at some distance to enjoy the refreshing air, before the sun-beam should grow warm. Oh joy! cried Zenobia, after long anxiously gazing around on the vast horizon, at length I discern an object to break this horrible uniformity. She had no sooner spoken, than the litters, the horsemen, and the camels suddenly disappeared. She turned, and saw them prostrate behind a high ridge of sand.

Septimia, half raising her hand, beckoned her to draw near, and they sunk together into a shallow sandy pit. The curiosity of Zenobia, however, could not be entirely restrained. She cautiously raised her head, and again distinguished the same dark body in the horizon. It seemed to approach, then recede—again it drew near—now passed rapidly to the right, then to the left—once more came forward, and at last totally disappeared. The guides and horsemen having waited a considerable time lest the object of apprehension should again be seen, arose, the litters were put together, the females entered them, and they proceeded onward.

Escaped by miracle! exclaimed Caleb, for they appeared as if they had seen us. To Zenobia's inquiring looks Septimia answered, that it was a band of Arabs. How much more noble and useful to the eastern world, remarked Zenobia, were the Roman and Persian, instead of perpetually harassing each other, to direct

their power against this lawless race and try to subjugate or reduce them to civilization.

Hast thou forgotten, asked Septimia, who it was that said they never should be reduced or subjugated? Let all the world conspire against these descendants of Ishmael, yet ages to come shall find them as they are at this day, wild, lawless, and independent; for the word of God hath said, that the hand of man shall not prevail against them.

The face of the country, to the great relief and pleasure of Zenobia, now began to wear a new aspect—verdure again appeared, and she saw bushes of wild hyssop and a few palm trees thinly scattered over the plain. My mother, said Zenobia, some few hours back, when leaving a luxuriant country, how did my repinings every instant increase! As the prospect saddened, the more morose I grew, and at length disdained to look at even the few trees and scanty herbage that still remained: now, having travelled so long

through trackless sands, how welcome seems that little shrub!—yon patch of grass—nay, every blade, every leaf is now of value. Can deprivation alone teach us enjoyment?

The prospect continued to improve at every step, until the mountains opening, the most welcome, rich, and noble sight now displayed itself;—olive grounds, saffron and poppy fields, vineyards, orchards, gardens, and groves of silk and cotton: the admiration and surprise of Zenobia were extreme, and at every newly-discovered beauty she eagerly pressed her mother to look out and admire. Septimia, reclined on a couch, thought no beauties could equal those she watched in the varying countenance of her child; but roused by a sudden cry of Zenobia, a cry of joy and wonder, she enquired the cause. Often have I seen castles in pictures, exclaimed Zenobia, but never before saw a real castle. Oh how majestic, how glorious, thus resting like a crown upon the summit of the

mountain ! a crown ! no ; a warlike helmet, that streaming banner, its waving plume—the battlements seem all alive—soldiers ! they are ; and the blaze which dazzles my sight must be the reflection of the sun upon their arms. Oh, my mother, but behold that sight, and thy heart will throb like mine.

Septimia, shaking her head with a melancholy smile, yielded to entreaties ; and rising, leant forward to take a view of this admirable object, when——instantly the hue of death spread itself over her countenance—again she looked and strained her sight with looking, and a faint shriek issued from her lips. Ere the terrified Zenobia could learn the cause, their litter was stopped by Caleb, who addressing Septimia—pointed upward, saying, there stands your brother, waiting for ye to join him ; we are to remain here till further orders.

Septimia raised her eyes—there indeed stood Elkanah on the brow of a high hill.—She hesitated, but now convinced,

most fatally, that she was entirely in his power, she slowly quitted the litter, and leaning on Zenobia, ascended the eminence. On joining Elkanah, Zenobia saw that it was the wish of her mother she should retire, and therefore, of her own accord, quitted them, wandering forward a few paces.—She could not avoid however looking back, and on perceiving that her mother was weeping bitterly, she would have flown again to her, had not Septimia, who guessed her intention, waved her hand as desirous of her absence.—She turned away, and walked slowly on.

The long ridge of mountains on the slope of which she was standing seemed to form a circle, having but one opening, and that towards the south; still she continued walking until arrived at the summit, when a thick grove of palms, which intercepted the view into this vast amphitheatre, abruptly ceasing, she beheld——Oh what were the emotions of Zenobia at that instant! unprepared, unap-

prized, unknowing—having travelled so long through so vast a desert, which she now clearly saw spread far on every side into the distant horizon, except at the east, where it seemed bounded by a river—what was her amazement on looking downward, to behold a large, extensive, magnificent city!—its walls and fortifications stretching to the foot of the surrounding mountains—pillars, columns, triumphal arches, colonnades, palaces, and temples, all of white, and mostly of polished marble, on which the last rays of the sun seemed to linger as if to satisfy her astonished gaze.—At the first glance, the first look around, she could not be mistaken, she could not be deceived, and Elkanah and Septimia had but just time to reach her, when in a transport of surprise, wonder, and admiration she exclaimed aloud, Palmyra! Palmyra in the desert.

Elkanah stopped and looked amazed, when Septimia, guessing his thoughts, faintly answered, There is not a city in

the world that she does not know its situation, origin, and present state—then to Zenobia, and now my child what does it appear to thee?—Speak, said Elkanah, how appears to thee this, thy native city. The astonishment and rapture of Zenobia at this intelligence was boundless.

My native city! and a shower of tears bedewed her face—this the place that gave me birth! Oh, I feel as if I had found a second mother! and she threw herself into the arms of Septimia.—Oh my mother, thanks, thanks for concealing it from me, the transport of this moment could not have otherwise been enjoyed; then turning towards it, and bending downwards, Palmyra! she cried, the gift of Solomon! thou beautiful gem dropped by the pilgrim on the waste! am I thy child, thy citizen?—I am, and from this hour adopt thee as my own—and she wept anew.

My brother, whispered Septimia, thou who art governed by omens and presages, what sayest thou to this? Zenobia lifts-

rally weeping over Palmyra. They are tears of joy, replied he in a low voice. Moreover I mark her words, never has she heard the oracles concerning herself, yet at the first sight of it, she usurps authority and adopts it as her own, unconscious that Palmyra must adopt her.

Never, never, replied Septimia, I have now agreed to thy wish of permitting her one sight of this interesting spot, do thou now perform thy promise and return with us to Armenia, there to live and die.

Such is my determination, replied Elkanah (Oh man of deceit), but I must no longer delay imparting the purport of these dispatches to the senate, and receiving fresh orders, relative to the northern cities: thou canst not stay without the walls, as the watch will, at sunset, take possession of these heights, we can enter at the Syrian gate, and ye rest this night at my house, unseen and unmolested; ere to-morrow's dawn we will quit the city, and resume our journey; nay, my sister be not thus inflexible, indulge

Zenobia with one sight, however short of the interior of her native place, and she will carry the cherished idea to her retreat without a repining wish.

As Elkanah spake purposely aloud, Zenobia heard every word, and never yet did her uncle appear so pleasing in her eyes; she determined not to biass her mother even by a look, yet it was natural to enquire Septimia's intentions by her countenance, and when Zenobia turned her eyes upon her mother, those of her mother ever met her's.

Be it so, said Septimia sighing deeply. She could say no more, interrupted by the ardent embrace of her daughter, and in silence they descended into the plain where they had left Caleb with the guides, the servants, and the litters.—They entered theirs, and proceeded towards a valley to the right.—To Septimia all was familiar, but Zenobia watched every object with intent earnestness; on each side of this valley she perceived many square towers of considerable

heights, which she was informed were sepulchres.—A noble aqueduct, that served to convey water to Palmyra next attracted her notice, and on reaching the end of the valley, the mountains opening on each side the city was wholly discovered. Elkanah here commanded a halt, wishing not to enter until dusk, and the company gathering together, remained concealed among a cluster of trees at the foot of a mountain. Zenobia rejoiced that their progress was thus retarded, as it enabled her to take a better view of the outside of the town; she saw various parties of soldiers leave the posterns and ascend in military order the surrounding heights—she saw torches at all the signal posts, and above the castle to the right, a mighty flame appear, like a burning standard waving in the wind.

All these motions were attentively observed by Elkanah and his friends, who, whilst they watched them, addressed each other in a low voice.—The disastrous intelligence, remarked Caleb, hath already

arrived, as these defensive preparations seem to declare; Zenobia, until now, had never spoken to Caleb, had never questioned Elkanah—how great then the surprise of Septimia to hear her ask with impatience of those around, concerning all she saw.—What was the purpose of these lights? Why were soldiers posted at that pass, and of what nature was this intelligence? For the first time, since her birth, Septimia harshly checked her daughter, remarking—Such affairs concern not us—women have no part in the management of states and warfare. Women may not, muttered Elkanah, but a queen must; then turning to his train, he ordered them to proceed.—They gained the south postern.—Elkanah advanced before the rest, and spake to him who guarded it—the door was opened, and one by one admitted, it closed after them.

Oh Palmyra! couldst thou have known, who at that hour entered thy walls!—Troy had a Cassandra to warn her of

her fate ; but thou, Palmyra, hadst no prophetess to cry forth in thy behalf—
Shut, shut thy gates ! for in the shape of heavenly youth and beauty, ruin and destruction enters !

The bars, as they fell across the postern, and the chains, as they rattled when hung athwart it, struck cold to the heart of Septimia : but filled that of Zenobia with various and contending emotions—she grasped the arm of her mother until separated by Elkanah, who, taking each under his own care, left Caleb to dispose of their guides and attendants, and Mariam to follow. Septimia stole a conscious look around, at every well known object, but when she passed the palace of Antiochus !—several lights were seen at different parts of the city, but that appeared a blaze of light : as Elkanah, holding their hands, passed through his arm, strode hastily along, she gave one lingering look behind, and in a portico of the palace, illuminated by lamps and torches, saw an assembly of men in deep

and anxious debate, one of whom she fancied was Antiochus.

All that Zenobia witnessed, at that hour, made an impression never effaced—the different groups of passengers in the streets, the doors thrown open, people walking to and fro as at noon-day: but that which pleased her most, was the delightful security and confidence in each other that open doors seemed to imply, and this which pleased the inexperienced Zenobia, was the cause of extreme alarm to both Elkanah and Septimia; they well knew, that when the Palmyrenians were in no dread of one another, they were in dread of a foreign enemy—they could see that the whole city wore an appearance of alarm—vague sentences were caught of, Most true! the senate meets to-morrow! Where are the generals?

Elkanah, as he passed along, remarked a figure, standing pensive and alone, against one of the pillars of the temple of Adrian, whom, on a nearer approach, he saw by the glare of a pass-

ing torch was Orodes; two or three citizens he observed, near Vespasian's arch, speaking with the utmost vehemence; others roaming about the streets, seeking, yet when met, regardless of each other; a vacant look, an anxious voice, an hesitating pace, a low stifled enquiry seemed to pervade every class, and all appeared consternation and suspense.

At length they reached the mansion of Elkanah, here the doors were also widely open, they entered, and every apartment but one was deserted, in this they found an aged female domestic, whom Elkanah ordered to attend upon Septimia and her daughter. Septimia would have spoken, but the wily Elkanah hastily disengaging himself, and intreating her to take refreshment and repose, that she might be able by break of day to resume the journey, abruptly quitted the room, and with rapid strides, leaving his house, went towards Adrian's temple, where, in the same spot, and in the same attitude, excepting that his face

was now wrapped in his gown, he found Orodes.

Septimia, as one stunned by violence, sat motionless, and only recovered to weep abundantly: but a few hours back, and she thought herself leagues distant from Palmyra, and now to be beneath her brother's roof! within a few paces of her husband! thus drawn involuntarily, yet of her own accord, to the precipice she so much dreaded, she could only weep; and Zenobia respecting her sorrows, though she knew not that herself was the fatal cause, forbore to make enquiry.

Thus passed three lingering hours, and Zenobia had but just obtained her mother's consent to retire to rest, and was with Mariam assisting her to undress, when the door was thrown open, and Elkanah again entered, his look and step unusually animated and hurried. We must defer our journey, he said; the senate assemble by break of day, and I am summoned to attend its deliberations

ye cannot quit the city but under my protection—here then remain, my sister, in privacy and concealment, and at dusk prepare to renew the journey; the delay is not only unavoidable, but necessary to repair thy strength, and render thee better able to bear more fatigue.

All this was spoken rapidly in order to check the murmurings of Septimia, and when he perceived that she saw resignation was her only resource, he seated himself by Zenobia, and thus addressed her, with his accustomed severity of look and harshness of voice, slowly dwelling on each word.

Thou must quit this city, Zenobia, and return with thy mother, to thy solitude in Armenia, and there live happily, there enjoy uninterrupted health and prosperity; thou mayst there wed, and if blessed with offspring, they may also be prosperous and happy; their children likewise may be equally blessed. Let thy daughters and their female children be ever named after thee, that the name of

Zenobia may never die. As he spake; the enthusiasm of his subject and hidden intention gave a fire and energy to his look, which was quickly caught by his youthful hearer; he perceived it, and instantly took advantage of her rising emotion by adding, Thou wilt ask wherefore this exordium, and it is right that thou shouldst be satisfied. Know then, that shortly after thy birth, it was spoken by the oracle at Balbec——Hold! hold! cried Septimia, in mercy hold!—That oracle decreed, continued Elkanah, raising his voice, though neither I, nor thou, nor any of our faith, should put belief in such delusions—and he looked reproachfully at his sister—that thy fate, *Zenobia*, and that of this city, Palmyra, was one.

He paused, and even his cold and selfish heart was touched at the emotion which his words had created—an emotion of mingled wonder, pride, tenderness, and sensibility. Predictions, continued Elkanah, averting his countenance, are often fulfilled, because predicted.

This city, though peopled by a mixture of Pagans, Jews, and Christians, is yet a heathen city, a Roman province: its population and that of Palmyrene is thirty to one in favour of the heathen; the oracle is therefore not to be slighted. Palmyra at present thinks thee dead, and a fatal blow having been given to Rome, she expects the stroke, and appears to wait for it with the humility of a slave crouching at the feet of the Persian, without making one effort to defend herself; since thy loss they conceive themselves predestined to ruin, and will not raise a hand to save their country.

Pereceiving that Zenobia was about to suggest his own design, he imposed silence, and continued—

It is my intention therefore to save Palmyra. When thou and thy mother are restored to thy retreat at Zaantha, I shall return thither, and make known that thou art still living; thus convinced of thy existence and safety, they will rouse from the abject lethargy in which they

are at present plunged, and by prudence and valour, not only defend their country from the invader, but attack him with success : peace secured, industry and commerce will again raise their now dejected heads, and as long as the name of Zenobia shall exist, Palmyra will flourish.

He paused, he looked at Zenobia, and hardly could he master his exultation and triumph ; he saw he had gained his every wish, and had now no longer any thing to dread from the influence of his sister. Septimia would again have spoken, and represented, that when Antiochus knew his daughter were alive, he would claim her—that when the Palmyrenians were told their idol were in existence, they would force her to dwell with them. Edkanah had thoroughly accomplished his purpose for that night, and now reminding Septimia that the house they were then in was hers, and desiring them to be ready for their journey to Armenia by the next evening, he once more hastily quitted the apartment.

The faculties of Zenobia seemed to have been affected by the arts of magic; she saw not her uncle's departure, she saw not her mother at her side—she heard not the pathetic voice whispering, *My child!* nor felt the tender arms which drew her gently to a bosom filled with anguish and with sorrow unutterable. *Zenobia, my child!* was again repeated, and accompanied by the softest caresses, such only as a mother can give, a daughter receive. Zenobia remained unmoved, and what could Septimia more than caress and weep?—Weep on, Septimia, and relieve thy agonized breast; thou hast enjoyed fifteen years of uninterrupted happiness, but those are numbered: thou gavest thine offspring an heathen father, and from that source have thy present sorrows their rise.

The morn appeared, and still found the citizens of Palmyra assembled in the streets. When does the senate meet? enquired one.—By day-break, replied his neighbour.—Elkanah is arrived, exclaimed another; I saw him last night

go into the house of Orodes, where most of the senators were assembled, to whom he gave letters which he had received when escorting two female relatives towards Judea.

Here a fourth citizen accidentally passing, stopped to enquire was the news confirmed.—Not a doubt remains, said Caleb, who now joined the party. Valerian, the Roman emperor, having rescued Antioch, imprudently ventured into Mesopotamia, where, betrayed by that Egyptian sorcerer, his bosom friend Macrianus, he was delivered up to the Persian king, and is now a prisoner in chains at Ctesiphon.—Thus the Roman empire is no more, said one of the group; the wise, the excellent Valerian, succeeded by his son, the wretched, cruel, abandoned Gallienus, now our emperor! every barbarous nation around us is rising to shake off the Roman yoke, and we are threatened by the Persian.

Where is Odenathus, Heracian, Balista, Zabdas? enquired several voices.—Immaterial where, replied one among

them, since not in Palmyra. Here are troops within and without our walls, but seemingly not one commander with skill enough to inspire the soldier with confidence; our fortifications having been neglected these last ten years, are far from being in the best state of defence; our senators differ among each other—some are for treaty, others for war; and our whole city appears as a fascinated bird dropping into the jaws of the basilisk.

Being informed by Caleb, that the senators were assembled in the court of the Temple of the Sun, where sacrifice had already been performed, they repaired thither, and found Antiochus haranguing that august body, but nobles, soldiers, citizens, and people, all appeared sullen and dejected. Caleb, on perceiving Elkanah among the crowd, went up to him, and whispering, enquired had Septimia consented. The only reply Elkanah made was fixing his eyes on the small door of an archway at the further end of the street; it opened, and a faint glimmer of

white appeared at the entrance. The eyes of all following those of Elkanah, a murmur of enquiry arose, which Antiochus speedily satisfied.

The priestess of Apollo and Hyrcanius, by order of the senate, this day lead on a solemn virgin procession to offer sacrifice at his altars; ere they enter the temple, let them be well instructed in the nature of their prayer—let them be told to strive and avert the wrath of heaven, by restoring Valerian to his liberty and throne, and by saving us both from Galienus and Sapor.

The advice of Antiochus was adopted, and the priestess, informed of their desire, instead of ascending the steps of the temple, stopped in the court. The population of Palmyra seemed to be assembled at this spot; the men, through respect to the sacred procession, bowing with veneration, and the women, matrons, wives, and virgins were all covered as customary with their veils, and these, as mourning the loss of Valerian, were uniformly

black. Silence being commanded, Antiochus arose, his words, his voice, his countenance alike sad and desponding.

Mourn! mourn, ye virgins! ye wives and matrons, mourn! ye children, lift up your infant voices in lamentation for the great, the good Valerian in captivity! put up your prayers with tears to the gods that they may break his Persian chains, and restore him to his people.—If kings are thy delegates on earth, O Jupiter, king of gods and men! avenge the cause of this; let his sighs come unto thee—pity his age, and restore him to freedom. Look down upon this devoted city, now a defenceless prey to surrounding enemies; for the arm of protection is far away; and may be intercepted—send hither our protectors, O Jupiter! nor let us also become, with Valerian, captives to Persia.

He said no more, the priests drew near, the victim was slaughtered and examined, and a cry of despair followed the inauspicious ceremony. Mourn,

mourn, ye Palmyrenians, added Hyrcanius, for destruction is your doom,—lament, for the hour so long prophesied is come,—hope no more, for your fate is sealed.

He ceased,—when instantly, one stepping from the crowd shouted aloud, Rejoice, oh Palmyrenians! Rejoice! Sing praises to our gods oh ye women of Palmyra! for safety, honour, and prosperity is ours! All eyes were turned upon the speaker,—it was Orodes; who springing on the pedestal of a column, clung to it with one arm, whilst the other was stretched forth, as he exclaimed, Palmyrenians! our sun, it is true, did set, but it is again risen,—our fate did seem fixed, but it again fluctuates,—your pride, your boast, your glory, your idol, lives. . . .

A cry, an agonized cry was heard, and the garment of Orodes seized by one among the hundreds of females assembled. Elkanah sprang forward, and to him she said in suffocating sobs, Oh wretched dupe that I am! is this thy promise?—

this the return thou makest me for depending on thy word?

All were amazed, but the soul of Antiochus alone was roused to more than consternation or amazement. That voice! he exclaimed, so like the voice of Septimia, of my wife! Could I believe that it were possible.—Be convinced, said Elkanah—and at that moment Elkanah threw off all disguise, when with a daring hand he tore the veil from the face of his sister. Reproach not me, he cried,—thou betrayedst thyself: hadst thou remained silent, could thy husband have known thee among hundreds of women here gathered, clothed alike in white and mourning? To her sigh of, Perfidious! he added, And why accuse me of perfidy?—have I deceived thee? Thy wish was to enjoy for a few years the rights and pleasures of a mother,—and hast thou not enjoyed them fifteen years? Now learn that a father, an uncle, a country, have also their claims, which must and shall be satisfied.

Oh my brother ! cried Septimia, forced now to acknowledge that his words in part were true. Antiochus eagerly approached her, but aware of public decorum, contented himself with supporting her sinking form upon his arm, whilst most of the senators crowded round to welcome her return. Noble Septimia, said they, thy brother hath acted wisely in bringing thee for shelter to Palmyra; for soon will the open country be overrun by the enemy, whilst our walls when repaired, may protract, or with the assistance of the gods, avert our ruin.

But why, demanded a senator, why are we to rejoice so extravagantly at the preservation and return of the wife of Antiochus? Though this with other Syrian matrons, was indeed our boast, our pride, yet never was she our idol. I spake not of the wife of Antiochus, answered Orodes, but of his daughter,—of the daughter of Antiochus and Septimia. Universal silence followed, and among the thousands assembled, not a motion

appeared, they stood as if expecting that the next words of Orodes would pronounce their final doom. Orodes still keeping his elevated station, pointed to Elkanah, and the tide of sight thus changed, Elkanah prepared to speak.

With pompous and affected solemnity, having fixed their attention,—I, as an Hebrew, said he, can put no faith in oracles, but as a citizen of Palmyra, must ever be deeply interested in her welfare. Recal to mind your oracle of Balbec. I need not ask if ye remember it, for it was engraven on every Palmyrenian heart—engraven on your temples, on your obelisks, your porticoes, and other public edifices. The words were woven in your garments, wreathed in your furniture, carved on your hearths, your beds. Many years are now passed, and the anniversary of that day has been a lost day throughout the province. Business neglected, amusements suspended, mourning universally displayed. Sixteen years back, when yonder temple of the

Sun, thronged to suffocation, was filled with votaries, and every pillar hung with life, the second oracle thus spake—
'She shall live, but will forsake my altar for that of the God of Abraham.' Then did that man, Antiochus, the father of Palmyra's idol, clad in black and despair, rush to the feet of Apollo, and fling from his arms the dead body of an infant, which infant, before ye all I take my God to witness, was the newly-deceased offspring of one of my freed-men's wives, both of whom are here present, and are now at liberty to swear to the truth. It was my contrivance, for I do nothing I dare not acknowledge, and hereafter when called upon by the senate, I will make known my motives.

Orodes perceiving that the impatience of the people would not suffer them longer to listen to the narrative of Elkanah, thus deliberately dropped word by word, exclaimed aloud, Palmyrenians! she lives! While we mourned over that spurious infant, the real infant lived.

Nursed, reared, and educated, by its fond, adoring mother, in the deepest solitudes of Armenia, it grew and flourished. An Hebrew, 'tis true; but did not the oracle foretel she should be thus?—provided she live and prosper, let us not regard at what altar she worships. Could ye but see her as I have!—skilled in languages and science, preferring Palmyra to the whole world, of beauty incomparable, of stature majestic, far exceeding any present, the simplicity of early youth joined to the experience of age; possessing grace, dignity, virtue—but judge yourselves—behold Zenobia!

At the instant, her veil accidentally falling, she stood revealed to every eye. The glowing blush that had risen beneath it, at hearing herself thus extolled, had not yet forsaken her cheek; and her humid eyes still sparkled with bliss, at this full confirmation that she was thus idolized by a great, a generous nation! During Elkanah's speech she had ascended a few steps of the temple, in order to

have a better view of the people, at first wholly unconscious that she was the subject of his discourse, and thus raised above all heads, she appeared a breathing statue of beauty, chastened by majesty.

The ferment that followed that long and awful pause of astonishment, rapture, and admiration, which this disclosure occasioned, appeared not as ordinary joy, but the very frenzy of delight. The acclamations, the shouts, the press forward, the mutual embracings—they fell prostrate; ready to tear up the pavement with their hands, they ran wildly to and fro, then stopped, again to look upon her—Zenobia! was the cry; Zenobia! echoed from hill to hill, and the air was filled with the transporting sound. Their madness then taking a new turn, unable longer to strain their voices, they flew to warlike instruments, and the loud blast of triumph was accompanied by ten thousand voices.

Had not Elkanah with cautious prudence taken charge of Zenobia, leaving

Septimia to the care of Orodes, and led her to an enclosed area, he would have been pressed to death; for the people not daring to approach their divinity, sought to bestow on him their tokens of gratitude and affection.

Antiochus, who it should seem was most concerned in these events, appeared the least. Wholly forgotten, he remained alone in the temple court, as one thunderstruck, every faculty overwhelmed. Sometime after, he looked around, and still found himself alone, not a being even in sight; for the multitude were gone in an impetuous torrent to his palace, whither Elkanah had been forced to lead Septimia and Zenobia, in preference to his own dwelling; the senate having declared, that henceforward the wife and daughter of Antiochus could live no where but under his own roof.

The people as if dreading to lose sight of her even for a few hours, cried out as the door was closing, Turn, oh Zenobia, and look once more upon us!—she did, with

that calm and unabashed dignity which proved she was born to receive homage. Hark ! said one, she speaks—yet not a murmur broke the air. On hearing these words, she strove to address them, but timidity then for the first time summoned, appeared in her cheek, clad in blushes. Orodès taking advantage of the general silence which followed, exclaimed aloud—Her litters are preparing, and to-morrow she departs with her mother for Armenia.

Universal tumult and confusion ensued : the litters were found, dragged forward, and crushed to atoms, the camels secured, and the guides forced to take refuge in the neighbouring houses : such the blind fury of some, while others ran to close and fasten the gates of the city. Septimia by a motion of her hand, commanded attention ; Palmyrenians ! can ye keep Zenobia against her will ? The body indeed ye may detain awhile, but the spirit, through restraint, will

pine, and seek its freedom in the refuge of another region.

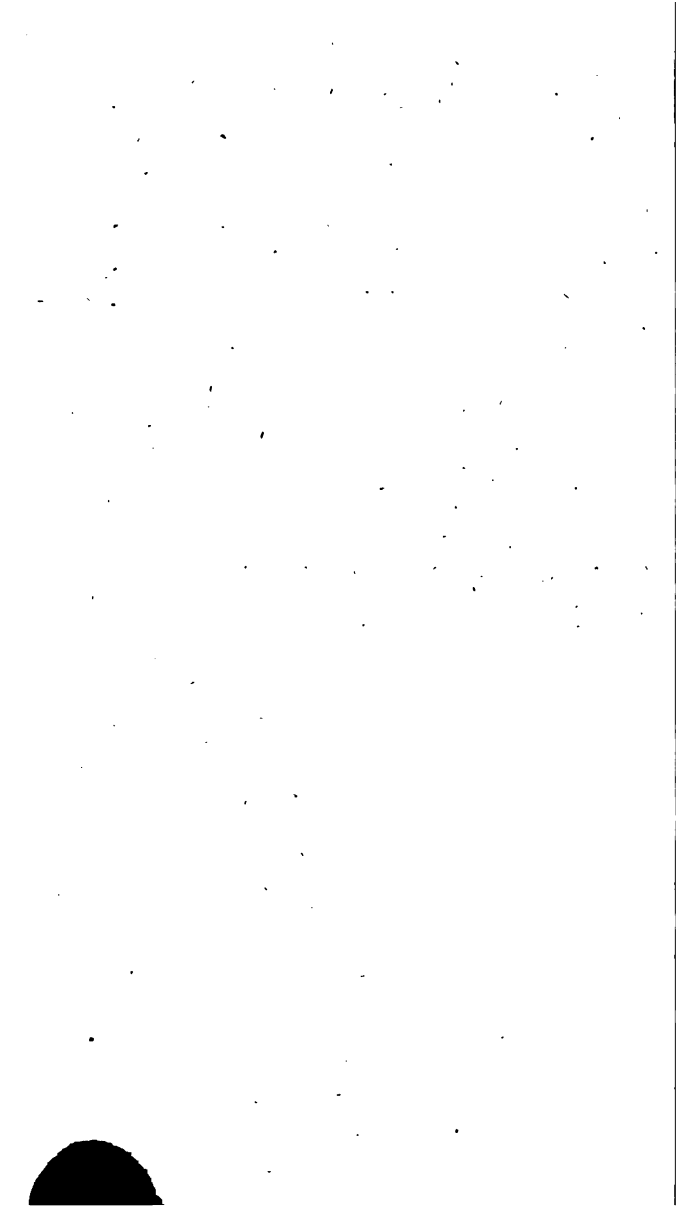
The idea she held out roused them to madness, which the terrified Septimia, now fatally convinced that she must submit, wisely, and at the moment, suppressed, by adding, Fellow citizens, from this hour to that of my death, I quit not Palmyrene, and Zenobia will never forsake me, nor my ashes. Another shout echoed through the firmament, and Septimia! was the cry. As the door was closing she turned to her daughter, and encouraged her to speak to them.

Sleep in peace, said Zenobia, addressing the multitude, hereafter sleep in peace, for your stolen palladium is restored. They listened to the sound of her voice, they watched the closed door, and from that moment noise, tumult, and extravagant sounds of joy died away; a low stifled murmur of delight succeeded; tears were not shed by women alone, nor the soft sigh of sensibility breathed alone by virgins.

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

Antiochus shortly after passed unnoticed through the dispersing multitude. He was challenged by the guard near his palace as one unknown, and trembled as he ascended the steps of his own door. Cold, doubtful, and irresolute, his feelings tinged by anger and indignation at all that had passed, he stood pondering on the threshold. Enter Antiochus ! enter—banish all distrust, and jealousy and hatred—delay not—lose not the blissful moment of re-union—give and receive forgiveness, and be convinced that the ties of nature are the ties of God.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



ZENOBIA,

QUEEN OF PALMYRA,

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

Beneficial effects of Zenobia's return to Palmyra—The arrival of Odenathus—Messengers sent to Sapor the Persian King, requesting his friendship and alliance—The remarks of Zenobia on Odenathus' pronouncing his deceased wife's funeral oration—Marcus Terentius, a soldier, condemned to death—Zenobia saves him—Longinus instructing Zenobia—They are joined by Odenathus and Antiochus—The latter repair to the Senate House—An insolent and hostile answer is received from Sapor—Odenathus and his armies sent against Persia.

YE men of subtle policy, are your several views likely to succeed? Verily, said Elkanah, the Jewish faith will yet spread through the East, and our scattered

people be again a nation. Palmyra truly shall now be free, exclaimed Orodes, and become the emporium of the world. The path is marked out that leads to a throne, mused Antiochus, though not for myself, for my offspring: be my Zenobia and her children raised to empire, I die contented.

As Elkanah and Orodes had foreseen, the restoration of Zenobia, (the beauteous Armenian dove of peace and safety) effected an entire revolution among the Palmyrenians: no longer careless of themselves, their families, and country, they instantly with ardour joined in placing their city in a state of defence. The patriotic spirit over-ran the province, and in a few days Palmyrene and its capital, defied the approach of the invader.

Time rather strengthened than abated their adoration of Zenobia; her religion was thought not of, or rather they as well as Antiochus submitted to what was considered the will of Apollo, and saw her tread in the steps of her mother with-

out one attempt to recal her to those of her paternal ancestors. By her own desire she was henceforward excluded from public view ; and the people satisfied that she never quitted their walls, respected her retirement.

Though Antiochus, when he considered himself childless, had wantonly boasted that he would on demand have given his offspring in sacrifice to his gods, now that he knew what it was to be a father, would have suffered death rather than risked her life, more precious to him than his own. His hours were devoted to the improvement of Zenobia in such sciences as were unknown to Septimia, and the Armenian sage, and his fortune lavished to gratify and embellish his distinguished daughter. Her education wanted but the finishing grace, and to give that grace, so exquisite, so perfect, Longinus was invited from Athens.

Orodes and Elkanah often met on their several views in state and religion, and a league was formed between them,

which the blessing of heaven was never asked to ratify. One secret alone—that concerning their respective oracles, had not escaped: though each rightly suspected the other, yet neither ventured to enquire the truth of Caleb, whose society was often sought by Orodes, and suffered by Elkanah, such the fertility of his fancy and quickness of invention. Unblessed by fortune, and of obscure rank, Caleb the Hebrew, had no power to put any great design in execution, therefore felt honoured when admitted into the confidence of those who possessed that power.

Orodes was standing with Elkanah in the gateway leading to the west, when joined by Caleb. The wife of Odenathus is no more, said the latter, and news is just arrived that Odenathus himself is hourly expected. From whence? demanded Orodes eagerly. From Alexandria—and the next moment Caleb and Elkanah were left alone. They had not long thus remained, when Orodes again appeared on horseback—hastily waving his hand

to Elkanah, he rode past them, and spurring his horse, was soon out of sight.

He is gone to meet our general, remarked Caleb: then turning to Elkanah, he enquired concerning the decision of the senate—was it for war or peace? I know not, having not yet heard the herald proclaim either, was Elkanah's reply as he walked away. Had our rulers, continued Caleb, again joining him, taken the advice of Odenathus, the Palmyrenians would have been suffered to pursue Sapor ere he reached his own country, and it is not yet too late—the associated troops are fresh and vigorous, while the Persian sinks exhausted by the late war—believe me, this, ere Sapor can raise fresh levies, is the hour of attack. Elkanah looked upon the dial, and then at the shadows in the street, and carefully settled the folds of his sleeves—but his mind was at that moment arranging a speech he designed to make at the next meeting of the people, in which he intended to exhort them to immediate hos-

tilities, ere Sapor could recruit his exhausted forces.

I wait here, added the never-silent Caleb, for the coming of Odenathus, willing to be the first to lead him to the palace of Antiochus, that he may see the confirmation of the report which Orodes doubtless has made him of thy niece Zenobia—yet in this methinks I err, for it is most natural that he should first repair to his own mansion, where lie the remains of his deceased wife. Elkanah thought otherwise, and slowly strolled towards Antiochus's dwelling, leaving Caleb still anxiously waiting the arrival of Odenathus. Not long did he wait—the signal from without was given, and the western gate opening, Odenathus, Orodes, and Balista, slowly rode in, side by side, all engaged in earnest conversation.

Caleb ran to meet them—but vain his endeavours to attract the notice of Odenathus. He walked by the side of his horse, plucked his garment, waved his

cap, and called aloud upon his name—Odenathus cast only one look upon him, and that was mournful and vacant; that of Orodes, who was in the centre, sedate and settled, while Balista appeared gloomy and dissatisfied.—They rode on, until they reached the senate-house, when giving their horses to the soldiers who followed, they entered, leaving Caleb standing without among the crowd.

Odenathus was received by the senators with joy and respect, but conformable to the dignity of the place, his private loss was not mentioned.—As a national object, Zenobia, however, was instantly spoken of, and all were eager to express the blessed consequences of her preservation and return, when to their utter surprise and disappointment, Odenathus listened to them with apathy and indifference: one of the senators offered to defer the sitting if he wished to repair to the palace of Antiochus, and convince himself that she far exceeded their warmest praises; he coolly declined their offer,

and urged them to hasten his commission, as he intended, his domestic duties over, to return without delay to the army.

Odenathus advised war, but the senate fearful that the first defeat would bring final ruin, were resolved on offering the Persian king terms of peace.—I know the man personally, my lords, said Odenathus, and I beseech ye, not to sue to him—he must be scourged, not flattered.

All that the general urged to strengthen this advice was disregarded, of which when convinced he yielded, though reluctantly to their determination.—They directed him in the name of the province to send messengers to Sapor, charged with valuable presents, and a letter in which the people should excuse themselves from having violated any treaty, and humbly entreat a continuance of his amity and alliance.

The secretary having written the letter, it was handed to Odenathus, who blushed as he perused it.—He then delivered up his sword, and bowing respect-

fully to their commands of waiting in the city until further orders, retired to prepare the presents.—These were such as the senate had directed, and the same hour he dispatched the messengers to Persia.

Public duties thus fulfilled, the thoughts of Odenathus turned to those of a domestic nature.—His deceased wife was buried with suitable honours, and himself pronounced her funeral oration.—Her youth, her beauty, early decay, and untimely death, created universal interest, and when her son, the young Herodian, appeared to attend the ceremony, he was received with affectionate respect by all ranks of people.—Antiochus, was one of those named to assist Odenathus on the mournful occasion, and Septimia, in honour of the deceased, headed the matrons.—On their return to the palace, they sought Zenobia, who had declined witnessing the ceremony, and gently blamed her for absenting herself from one so interesting and splendid.

How sublime the eloquence of Odenathus, remarked Antiochus, how rich his imagination, and how dear to him was the deceased! But little, my father, said Zenobia, as she rose to leave the room; her virtues would have been better recorded by his sighs, and his grief expressed by silence.

A pause of a few minutes was broken by Antiochus, I see, said he, much to extol and much to condemn; that prompt decision of opinion is not feminine, and yet the angelic softness with which it is delivered, takes all asperity away:—her judgment is almost too mature for her years, though her actions at times are childishly playful.—She is too conscious of the high dignity of her calling, yet performs the most submissive offices for us.—I have seen her assist the helpless, infirm, and the aged, yet not deign to stir one step to please the noblest in the city.

In short, said Septimia smiling, what is amiss in her, is so countervailed by excellencies, that it becomes invisible.—

Do not raise her above mortality: replied Antiochus: though she is more dear to me than life, I see as yet little to wonder at, excepting what relates to outward figure.—Because, replied Septimia, the outward form is all that thou hast seen—to thee, Antiochus, expect it not, she never will be otherwise, unless, which Heaven avert! thou shouldst be visited by poverty or sickness, or any other distress, then will she prove to thee, as I have ever found her, a benignant friend.—To me, she has been both mother and child, and as a mother herself, when that day shall arrive, how should she not prove exemplary?

And as a wife? demanded Antiochus—Septimia hesitated—there I know not what to say—she is gentle in command, but hard to be commanded.—Shall we leave her to chuse? again he asked. No, said Septimia, I have heard her remark, that in the temple of the world, women were the statues, adorning the compartments, while men privileged to stroll

through the area, alone had liberty to chuse and ask; she will never quit her station to select, neither be forced upon the choice of any—be it thy part simply to communicate the suit that shall be made for her, and be her's the power to accept or to reject.

Zenobia had wandered with a book into the gardens of the palace; the heat of the day had been great, and for coolness and refreshment, she repaired to a fountain half-shaded by budding almond-trees. Near this spot was a terrace overlooking one of the public squares, whither Antiochus, when desirous of gratifying the people with a distant sight of his daughter, would often prevail on her to appear. A door at the end of the terrace opened into the square, but never quitting the gardens, she scarcely knew whither it led.

Whilst seated near the fountain, a sudden tumult beneath the walls attracted her attention, and going to the spot, she leaned forward to discover the cause; a

concourse of people were advancing rapidly, of whom enquiring, she was answered, (whilst every head at sight of her bowed low) that the soldiers were leading a criminal to execution. Immediately an aged man bursting through the crowd, fell upon his knees, and stretching out his arms towards her, exclaimed, It is my son! Oh, Zenobia, thou hast never yet asked a favour of the Palmyrenians.—What is his crime? demanded Zenobia.—Desertion.—A soldier then?—A soldier, replied the father, and a brave one.—Yet desert!—An enemy, or rather a treacherous friend, deceived him. When stationed at the camp of Thapsacus, he was told that a fatal accident had befallen me; he implored leave of absence for only a few hours—it was denied him, and he fled, hoping to return ere his flight could be discovered; but a Persian on the opposite side of the river saw him quit his post—advantage was instantly taken, they forded the water at the very

spot—I do not deny his crime; I only ask his life.

Who condemns him? asked Zenobia.—Balista is his general, answered the father.—Now in the city?—The same. Oh, my son!—behold him! in chains, and led to death. A party of soldiers appeared at a distance surrounding the culprit, and headed, not by Balista, but Odenathus. Zenobia leaving her station, opened the door at the end of the terrace, and joined the throng.

When the military escort arrived at the place of execution, it halted, by the command of Meonius, now a centurion in his uncle's forces: agreeable to form, the soldier's crime was read aloud, and sentence was ordered to be performed.

Strike! cried Meonius.—Hold! exclaimed Odenathus. Is it not enough that the man must suffer? is he to be denied one last embrace of his afflicted father?—Poor aged man! nay, rise—implore not me; justice must be done.

If not for mine, said the father, oh! pardon him for *her* sake. Odenathus followed the direction of his hand; and for the first time met the eyes of Zenobia. They stood, and long gazed upon each other; at length she advanced, saying, I know thee not, either personally or by name. Surprized at this address, he hesitated what to answer; the words of the old man had at first led him to suppose she might be either the wife or the betrothed of Marcus Terentius, the unhappy soldier, but that thought on a second look immediately vanished. Her extraordinary beauty and stature both inspiring awe—her robes white and floating, clasped by a golden zone—her plaited hair encircled by silken fillets—her naked feet and arms richly adorned with sandals, anklets, and bracelets—her appearance proclaimed her to be a woman of the first rank; yet to be thus standing among the crowd of people and soldiers!

Thou knowest me not! repeated he, astonished; nor I thee, fair virgin—I

know not who thou art. Thou art not a priestess, for where is thy veil? Neither one of our matrons, wives, or daughters, for such walk not thus in the public streets unattended and gaily attired, displaying their beauty to the sun, and their charms to the eyes of men.

Thy rebuke is just, said Zenobia, whoe'er thou art.—I intended no rebuke, he replied.—Nay, deform not thy honest frankness by the false arts of courtesy—thou hast rebuked me; but conscious of the motive of my appearance here, I stoop to no explanation. This pious, and I dare believe, brave man, is condemned—yon aged Palmyrenian is his father, and by him I have discovered that his son was betrayed, not by an honourable foreign enemy, but by a treacherous friend.

As she spoke, she accidentally glanced round at the spectators; but no sooner were her eyes turned on Meonius, than there they were fixed in a steady determined look; he could not support the

penetration of those eyes, and strove to retreat, when, with severe majesty, she advancing, said, as Nathan spake to David—Thou art the man; thou art that traitor, that perfidious friend—I know thee not; though known to all present, I know none here. By what means this soldier was betrayed I am yet unconscious, but thou art the man who didst betray him.

The attention and interest of all were roused, when the venerable father, encouraged by her words and presence, exclaimed with vehemence, It must be so; his own centurion then it was that forged the letter of my illness—yonder is the soldier by whom it was sent. When my son applied for permission to return, he was told the general would not allow it—Marcus fell into the snare, and fled to me; the centurion then made known his flight, and hath thus pursued him to this place of death.

Odenathus, touched with pity at the passionate eagerness of the old man, which

raised him above all respect, all restraint; bade Meonius come forward, and then reminded him, that alledging the importance of vigilance at that period, he did advise him not to grant the short absence demanded. Of the letter I know nothing, nor of the motive; but to the soldier who it seems has been thy worthless instrument, a free pardon shall be granted, if he owns the truth.

The soldier thus taxed and promised, confessed every particular; and Odenathus, with grief and anger, discovered that his nephew had planned the ruin of Terentius in order to separate him from a Persian captive with whom he was on the point of marriage.

Meonius waited not to hear the stern command of his uncle to withdraw, and remain confined to his house; fearing the indignation of the multitude, he slowly sheathed his sword, and sullenly walked away.

The guilt of my nephew shall not go unpunished, said Odenathus; but his

guilt effaces not this man's crime—he is a deserter, and desertion is death. A general murmur arose among the people, and the anguished father again clasped his son in his arms, as to take a last farewell.

All eyes were now turned upon Zenobia, whom they perceived advancing slowly towards Odenathus. I never yet craved a boon of any but heavenly Power—next to heavenly Power is that which, exerting an authorized discretion over life and death, leans to the side of mercy, and grants life. Assuming then an air of supplication, she added, This venerable father but now knelt down before me, debasing in the dust the white and sacred honours of his head, saying, I do not deny his crime, but ask his life. These words I repeat to thee—his crime is great, but his virtues greater: a good soldier is the bulwark of a country, but a good son invaluable.

Odenathus looked upon her, but ere he could speak, the multitude burst into

loud acclamations of joy ; and though Odenathus had not yet uttered one word, they unbound Terentius, whilst his fellow soldiers threw down their arms, and shook him roughly by the hand, and clapped the transported, yet bewildered father on the shoulder ; then, snatching down the black standard of death, cried out, Away with them to the guard-room, and let wine recal their spirits. The sword of Terentius may yet strike off the head of Sapor, and send crowds of Persian ghosts to attend his shade.

Zenobia and Odenathus alone remained in the square. Retreating, she cast upon him one look of thanks, and disappeared at the door of the terrace. Blessings, blessings on her ! exclaimed a voice, and Odenathus turning, beheld Orodes. On her ! on whom ? he asked ; who and what is she ?—Who but Zenobia, replied Orodes, smiling consciously. — That ! exclaimed Odenathus, that Zenobia, the daughter of Antiochus and Septimia ! that lovely, beauteous,

graceful being Zenobia!—The same, returned Orodes, calmly.—And what could have been the motive for deceiving me? Why, ere my entrance into Palmyra, didst thou describe her so widely different? as haughty, harsh, masculine, vain of acquirements—saying that the people's admiration was but folly and idiotism? Speak, Orodes, why didst thou thus mislead me?

Orodes only smiled, and shook his head. It was a sudden thought, he said, that occurred when I was told by Caleb that thou wert a widower; fearing that thou mightst become enamoured of that being whom I, with all the nobles of Palmyra, covet, canst thou blame me?

Odenathus heard no more; the next moment he was in the palace of Antiochus, whither Orodes watched him. My skill in the knowledge of the human heart, mused Orodes when alone, does not yield to that of Elkanah. Noble Odenathus! generous and unsuspecting, thy heart leans as I first desired it should

when, then a youth of fifteen, thou receivedst her a babe from the arms of her mother. But for my politic description, disappointment had followed the exaggerated praises of the Palmyrenians.

And yet nor the happiness of Odenathus nor that of Zenobia was the aim of the crafty, yet patriotic Orodes ; in Odenathus he saw the best defender of his beloved Palmyra, and could a union be ensured, in Zenobia, its future queen.

And tell me, Longinus, said Zenobia, as they took their places at a table near the tapestry-frame of Septimia, how long ere I attain a thorough knowledge of this language.—By application and diligence, replied he, in a few months ; but if, whilst I am explaining the necessary rules, thou art, as yesterday, tracing rocks and trees, buildings and prospects, I have little hope of revisiting Athens these five years.

A burnt sacrifice to the wrath of Lon-

ginus! exclaimed Zenobia, throwing her drawings into the flame of a tripod which burnt near them; then, checked by her mother's look, she appeared willing to give her whole attention to study, whilst he, with admirable patience and perseverance, devoted every faculty to her improvement. Their reading over, he requested her to write the substance of that morning's instructions, that she might look it over in his absence; she obeyed, and he conversed with Septimia; after a short time, still conversing, he took from Zenobia the paper she was rapidly filling, too rapidly in his judgment, and began perusing it; he had read a considerable part, when his mild features relaxed to a smile, and when he concluded, he more than smiled.

Listen to my advice, said he to Septimia, and defer the study of Greek for the present; the idea of acquiring it is truly hopeless.—It is so, cried Zenobia, rising hastily; but when calamity falls on me, or I alight on calamity, then will

thy instructions, honoured Longinus, be most welcome.

Yet ere I go, said Longinus, permit me to make known to thy mother, thy proficiency in state affairs. The first few, very few lines, in which there are nine errors, relate to the rules of Greek composition, and this is what follows—

‘The answer of Sapor, King of Persia, to the Senate of Palmyra’——It is not yet arrived, interrupted Septimia.—If it were, asked Zenobia, where would be my ingenuity in anticipating it?—I hope thou hast not done so with truth, said Longinus, and he read, his voice and manner corresponding to the words:

‘Ye boasting, vain, insignificant people, who are ye? ye that presume to address the great lord of Persia, the monarch of kings; what are ye, I again demand, that dare thus solicit my alliance—I, the chastiser of the proud Valerian? Ye famished inhabitants of a wilderness, whence sprung ye? Ye who thus audaciously send presents to me, the king of

the world and all its productions, do ye doubt my title? Have I not at this instant my feet resting upon the head of the Roman emperor? Was not Rome mistress of the world, and is not the world consequently mine? I will exterminate ye, ye insolent pretenders of the desert! By the vengeance of Sapor, ye shall be extirminated!!

Septimia laughing, held out her hand, and taking the paper from Longinus, would have burned it, when Odenathus, who had been with Antiochus in the anti-chamber a witness of all, rushed in, and prevented her. If I dared, he said, I would take that paper from thy hand; let not respect lose what force could obtain. Septimia gave it; but as she rose to receive him, her looks and bend of the head were cold and ceremonious; his reception from Antiochus had been the same, until Odenathus, conscious of the cause, had directly, with all the open frankness of a soldier, scorning evasion, related the error. Orodas led him into.

Septimia complacently received the excuse, yet as she accepted his extended hand, remarked, Was not my return alone worthy of congratulation?

And this, said Antiochus, perusing the paper, is thy opinion, Zenobia? I do not introduce thee to our general, as I find from him that ye have already met. And dost thou imagine that such will really be the answer from Sapor?—I do, for I know the character of Sapor better than doth the senate of Palmyra.

But, my child, is it not rather presumptuous to set thy opinion in opposition to that learned and experienced body?—No, my father, because those experienced and learned men judge of character by public report, by marvellous events, and illustrious ambassadors.—I more from private sources. When in Armenia, I saw one who had filled a menial office about the person of one of Sapor's queens, and learned from her, that the only time to gain a kind answer from the king was when he felt distressed

in mind or body; that his demeanour at such periods was most servile, but that at the instant distress was no more, all the arrogant and cruel insolence of his nature returned: was it then, when actually treading on Valerian's neck—was that the moment to make humble submissions, to offer presents, and solicit alliance?

Odenathus listened, and Antiochus, turning to him, said, Most singular, that thy opinion and that of Zenobia should be the same! These were nearly thy words; yet, overruled by the senate, thy advice was disregarded, and the abject embassy permitted to depart.—And the gallant Odenathus, said Zenobia, I understand, was made the sender; I marvel that *he* should have preferred the pen to the sword.—And wherefore? asked Antiochus, surprised.—Because of all the Palmyrenian characters given me at length by Longinus here, that of Odenathus is the only one in which I find nothing to censure.

Odenathus advancing rapidly, grasped the hand of Longinus, which action and his speaking looks convinced Zenobia that she had mistaken his person; the blush of surprise passed over her cheek, as she added, with composure, I need not be told then, my lord, that thou art Odenathus: I mistook thee for thy fellow general Balista, led into the error, I know not how, by the father of the pardoned soldier.—Pardoned, replied Odenathus, by thee; then, looking slowly around the room, his eyes were filled with tenderness as he addressed Septimia.

Dost thou not remember—many years ago, in this same chamber—thou wert seated, in that spot—not then, it is true, occupied in working tapestry; no, thou wert at that time otherwise engaged: beneath thy floating veil reposed a rosy sleeping babe; thou badst me go to the chace of the lion, and yet by perseverance, I gained my wish; thou placedst on my arm the infant hope of Palmyra, and I blessed her, invoking health, and beauty, and ho-

none—all, all are granted. . . When told she was no more, my grief could only be surpassed by thine and that of her father; when again informed that she lived, my transport must have equalled that of Antiochus.—Thus, Zenobia, thou hast caused me extremes of hope, and grief, and joy; what passion wilt thou next inspire?

My father, said Zenobia, to whom this speech appeared only the common effusions of gallantry, which of us has made the greatest proficiency in the study of human nature? I in the solitudes of Armenia, or thou in the schools of Palmyra? Then to Odenathus—The praises of the living follow so closely those of the deceased, that—pardon me, my lord, I fear a visit from the shade of thy late wife, to dispute what part is hers, and what mine. Perceiving that his countenance became pensive, she seized a shuttle, and added, with gaiety, Away, lest a Persian spy whisper Sapor, “On to the attack of Palmyra, for Odenathus is in the chains of an Omphale!”

Odenathus could only gaze and listen, when a messenger arrived from the senate, informing him and Antiochus, that an answer was just received from Persia, and that they were expected. As Odenathus and Antiochus quitted the chamber, they caught the exulting smile of Zenobia, which seemed to say, Its contents are already known by us.

The minds of these were so entirely, yet variously occupied, that they walked in silence to the senate house, where they found the august body of senators anxiously waiting for them—the dispatches were produced, and the seals being broken, one small written paper was found enveloped in several blanks—this being delivered to the secretary, he prepared to read—at the first glance, the blood rushed to his face, and he would have crushed it in his hand when commanded to read it aloud.—He obeyed, the passions of his auditors rising, by degrees, from surprise to the extremest height of wrath and indignation.

‘ And is it an unknown base inhabitant of an obscure town encircled by sands, that presumes to address himself to the mighty and powerful Sapor, king of all the Persias? to atoms tear his letters—in slavery detain his messenger—to the flames and river with his presents—I am thy scourge, Oh west! and Valerian, my footstool—Let Odenathus, the arrogant and ignoble writer of that letter, come to me with hands tied behind his back—let him prostrate himself in the dust—or my millions begin their march, and Palmyra is exterminated.’

The clamour that followed was extreme, nor did it subside until Orodes, taking advantage of a moment's silence, explained that Odenathus, certain of the answer, had re-written their letter, and that, unwilling to bring disgrace on the senate or his country, he had substituted his own individual name.

The illustrious Odenathus was now desired to come forward—and when thanked for his generous patriotism, the

only answer he made was throwing off his gown, when he appeared already clad in armour.—His sword, which had ever been a sword of victory, was taken down from the wall where it had remained, until the senate should declare for peace or war, and handed to him by Orodes—and as he received it, he exclaimed, I return not, until I pluck my crown of laurel from the gardens of Ctesiphon.

The senate was dissolved—war was publicly and solemnly proclaimed—the brazen quiver hung on the colossal figure of Mars, in the court of the temple of Adrian was unlocked, and the troops destined for service, therein deposited an arrow—expresses were sent to Zabdas and Heraelian, the one stationed in Cappadocia the other in Egypt, to repair with their forces to Syria, and Balista being left behind to protect the city with his veteran troops, in a few hours Odenathus and his army quitted Palmyra, never to return, or to return victorious.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

ZENOBIA, QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

Septimia, thinking herself neglected by her daughter, declines in health—is happily undeceived—New Zaantha—Odenathus returns triumphant from the Persian war—Marcus Terentius receives his civic crown—Odenathus proclaimed Prince of Palmyra—Asks Zenobia in marriage—Is rejected—Elkanah exacts of Zenobia an oath never to abjure the Jewish faith—She is accidentally prevented taking it by the child Herodian—Odenathus renews his suit for Zenobia's hand—Is declared King of the East—And married to Zenobia.

THE health of Septimia ever delicate, had visibly declined, since her residence in Palmyra.—The mountain air of Armenia, so like that of her own native land, was more congenial to her constitution than the sultry atmosphere of this city; but it was not change of air alone

that had wrought the sad change in Septimia.

She blamed herself for hourly regretting Zaantha, yet had not courage to cease regretting it—that lowly peaceful habitation, where she had spent so many years of bliss!—its surrounding natural loveliness, its beauties created by the hand of duteous affection—where every object reminded her of the love of Zenobia.—Happy Zaantha! and sighs were breathed—would I were still there—and tears were shed.

Can a mother conceal her tears and sighs from an affectionate and ever watchful child? She may conceal them, but does not the tear leave pallid cheeks, and the frequent sigh waste the strongest form? The cheek of Septimia grew pale, and her form wasted. Her daughter had long examined her looks, had long read her inmost thoughts.

From the day of having discovered, as she thought the cause of her mother's decline, Zenobia was often absent from the

palace, and when Septimia enquired for her, she was constantly informed that she was engaged in making alterations and improvements in the gardens.—Septimia, now wholly confined to her apartment, on such occasions spoke not, but her heart said—When at Zaantha, and the slightest indisposition attacked me, Zenobia never could be prevailed on to quit my side—Zaantha! why did I leave thee?

Flushed with spirit and vivacity, Zenobia ever returned to her mother, after even the shortest absence, what was then the eager transport with which she burst into her apartment on the evening of that day, when they had not met throughout the whole of the morning—My mother! and the face of Zenobia became as pale as that on which she gazed. Septimia, in silence, took the different restoratives offered, and calmly suffered her caresses, but made not the slightest return; a long, a very long silence followed, when Septimia exerting herself, spoke—Alas! that

the body should ever thus become the victim of the restless and unhappy mind! my person is truly here, but reflection will still dwell fondly on Zaantha, where thy infancy, thy childhood blessed me.

Perceiving that Zenobia, far from attending, was otherwise occupied,—Canst thou not, when even present, (now seldom present!) canst thou not spare me a few moments of thy society—I gave thee sixteen years of mine—what art thou seeking, Zenobia?—Why thus turn from me?—What can that cabinet contain to interest thee more than my words?—I seek, said Zenobia, the roses that adorned our travelling litter, and which were gathered by thy hand, the morning we left Zaantha: see, my mother, they are withered, it is true, but—nay, take them. Do not they still retain their fragrance? Inhale the scent, does it not remind thee of Zaantha?

Only assure me, cried Septimia, when tears and mutual endearments suffered her to speak; only convince me that thy

affection is the same as at the hour when these were gathered.—The same! said Zenobia; oh, no! the affection, the esteem, the love I feel at this hour, far surpasses all I then felt.—Then why, my child, hast thou of late been so little with me? Thou knowest full well that no one can perform like thee, those gentle kindnesses, those tender offices—a sick mother needs all these. I have often missed thee, Zenobia, for more grateful to me, a cup of water given by thy hand, than delicacies from the hands of others. Wilt thou, Zenobia, wilt thou, my love, now in this silent evening hour—now that we are alone, wilt thou listen kindly to my words?

Zenobia, seating herself by her mother, promised the strictest attention, and Septimia continued:—

I have often told thee, need I again say, that I would readily give up my life to make you happy, but stir not one step to make you great: possessing already the advantages of noble birth and great

riches, would that here thy prosperity were bounded; but to my sorrow, I am aware that thine will be no common fate. I wish not to dazzle thee by false ambition, for Heaven is my witness, not a particle of that baneful disease lurks within my mind; all I wish is to prepare thee for whatever may be thy destiny—a prison and slavery, or a crown and power, perchance both. I understand thy looks; thou wouldst say, ‘Palmyra is a republic:’ so once was Rome. Oh, my Zenobia! how often have I told thee, that had thy fate depended solely on me, thou shouldst rather have fed flocks in Armenia, than have ruled an empire. Shouldst thou then hereafter be elevated by the world, and be then betrayed by that world, promise me not to contend with, but to forsake it: when I am no more, if pressed by calamity, fly to our beloved retreat; there seek security and peace, and thou wilt find them there, for that is their abode. The loss of me, and that of other aged relatives, must be for-

gotten, for it is right that nature should call us before thee, but shouldst thou wed, and lose thy husband, or worse, his heart; shouldst thou be once a mother, and no longer a mother, dote upon a child, and that child neglect thee—Zenobia, take thy broken heart to Zaantha, there in the calm spot where thy infancy was nursed, call upon thy God, and end thy days in peace and solitude—an hour back when my heart was pierced with sorrow, I had resolved to return alone to Zaantha.

Zenobia pressed the hand of Septimia: Because, she said, thou thoughtst that thou wert neglected by thy child? I am now convinced, and this shall through life be a warning to me, that all mysterious coverings, even with a good purpose, tend but to evil. Opening a casket, which stood near her on a table, she took from it several drawings, and selecting one, presented it to her mother, asking of what place did it remind her. The flush of wonder and pleasure appeared in the countenance of Septimia. Zaantha! she exclaimed. The same, said Zenobia—

canst thou longer be surprised at my inattention to Greek and Longinus, when my heart was planning to rear a new Zaantha in the gardens of our palace? My mother regrets that loved retreat, said I to my father—could we but succeed in forming another as nearly similar as art and nature combined can produce. —Could we but invite from Armenia Artabazus—recall Sabina—

Is it completed? It is, Are they arrived? They are. What wouldst thou, my mother—thou wouldst not at this hour go thither! Oh make me not repent that I have told thee—and by prayers and caresses she prevailed on Septimia to defer visiting it until her strength should be restored; but the same hour presented to her Sabina and the aged Armenian. Not many days ere a happy change appeared in Septimia—her strength, her health returned, with the firm conviction that Zenobia's love was unabated.

Understanding the nature of her mother's feelings, Zenobia, when that be-

loved mother was able to bear the exercise, requested her father that she alone, accompanied by Mariam and Sabina, might lead her thither. Supporting her feeble steps, Zenobia conducted her to a spot where art was admirably concealed under the appearance of nature. True, all around was on a far smaller scale than the retreat in Armenia, but nothing however minute had been omitted, buildings, rocks, recesses, groves, flowers, all were here—and when they passed the hanging curtains of ivy and broad sheet of water, (supplied with labour and great expence from the river without the walls of the city) the deception was compleat.

The silence of Septimia was more expressive than words. Invited by her daughter to repose on a flowery bank near the entrance of the dwelling (built exactly similar to that at Zaantha) she could only sigh forth the name of dear Zenobia—and sank exhausted in her arms.

CHAPTER IV.

Swell high the sound of triumph, ye men of Palmyra ! raise loud the voice of exultation, and hasten to your temples, there to give thanks—for the sceptre of Palmyra is exalted, and your defender returns. Go forth ye women to the tops of the hills, and with tabret and harp, and songs and dance, proclaim the glad tidings of victory. Prepare the baths, the fragrant oils, and garments of peace, ye wives and aged matrons—for peace returns, led by the hand of conquest. Place watchmen on the distant mountains, ye Palmyrenians—then run and cut ye down branches of palm, and when ye see their rapturous motions, hear their joyful acclamations, pour forth a rapid flood to meet your general.

Palmyra ! be thy white and purple, and sea-green marble pillars, and thy rich Corinthian columns hung with living garlands, the encircling limbs of eager youth climbing impatient for the first look of Odenathus. Let the bright steel and burnished trophies surmounting thy

noble arches, be intermingled with breathing votaries of enthusiasm. Be thickly studded ye sculptured colonnades with the beauteous faces of virgins, and from every slender polished obelisk be displayed the welcome flag of victory. King of the sacrifice prepare the crowned victim. Vestal summon your sister vestals. Sweet choristers be robed in white, and be the path and steps of the altar scattered with golden dust. Hyrcanius throw open wide the glorious gates of the temple of the Sun, for the sun of triumph from its zenith now sheds its lustre on Palmyra. Odenathus is returned—Odenathus abroad a furious lion, returns to his own Palmyra the falcon to its nest.

The watchmen gave the signal—the whole population poured forth, and as quickly ebbed into the city: high above the living stream, crowned with palm, and clad in steel, sat the conqueror in a Persian chariot of massy gold, flanked on horseback by his fellow generals—the youthful Zabdas and Victorinus, and the

unconquered Heraclian. Before him was carried the standard of war, and behind the fruits of victory—prisoners, captive concubines, spoils, scythe-armed wag-gons, and elephants, camels, and horses laden with spices, gold, and jewels—his own invincible troops bringing up the rear.

When entered the porch of the temple of Jupiter, Odenathus descended from the chariot, and went to the altar; half kneeling on the upper step, he wrapped his head in his cloak, and prayed silently—the victims were sacrificed, incense burned, and the spoils consecrated to the gods: then turning, he addressed the multitude—My friends, the Persian lynx is not destroyed; driven into his den, not killed, he may ere long venture forth once more—vigilance and silence be our guards. Quitting the temple, they repaired to the great court thereof, where stood Hyrcanius, ready to unlock the brazen quiver of Mars—it was unlocked, and every soldier present drew forth his arrow there depo-

sited—the remainder were numbered—two score and ten are missing! said the priest—a bloodless victory! And Odenathus walked on to the palace of Antiochus, followed by the people: these becoming stationary before it, the women and children, like fragile flowers drawn through thick-standing corn, were quickly separated, and placed within the iron fence of the square in front of the palace. Shortly after, above at a high window, appeared Odenathus, attended by his son, his nephew, and his generals. Advancing to an open portico, Odenathus stepped before the rest, and said in that deep low voice which exacts and secures attention—

These testimonies of regard and approbation richly repay me for having done my duty, and now beloved fellow-citizens, before ye all assembled, do ye yours, by authorising me to reward valour and merit. Raising high his voice, he exclaimed, Marcus Terentius—no answer was returned—again he called, and still all was silence. Zabdas instantly

quitting his station, descended among the crowd, which piercing like an arrow, he disappeared amidst the troops; they fell back, and he was again seen dragging forward a soldier by the arm: the head of the soldier sunk upon his breast, for all eyes were upon him. Zabdas gave the sign agreed on, and the armed men rushing in front, threw their brazen shields over their heads—the same number of their comrades quickly ascended, these also bending beneath their shields, those below sprung upon them, and thus was Terentius mounted, and led by Zabdas to the level of Odenathus' feet, who now produced an oaken crown—Marcus Terentius, said he aloud, at three several periods in the late war thou savedst the lives of three Palmyrenian citizens, and but for thy arm, my nephew Meonius, had been slain, or worse, taken captive to Persia—wear thy civic crown.

He let it fall on the head of Terentius, who kneeling caught the skirt of the general's robe, and pressed it to his face. And

this, said Odenathus, looking down upon him, is the man who, when condemned, uttered not one word in his own defence, or breathed a sigh for pardon. Say, nephew, what doth thy heart dictate?—To see him, ere night, wedded to the Persian maiden, replied Meonius, and bestow on her a dowry ample as his merits. Terentius turning, rushed down the hill of shields, and leaped into the arms of his aged father, who stood ready to receive him. Silence being enjoined, the public crier read aloud—‘Marcus Terentius, the preserver of three citizens, henceforward appear at the public shows, and festivals, the theatres, and annual games among the senators—be received by the senate and the people standing, and be thy name entered on the public records. Hereafter thou art exempt from all duties and services in thy own person, and thy father and near kindred are for thy sake also exempt.’

The ardent sensibility of the old man proved that he particularly derived great

advantages thereby, and that the privileges obtained by the valour of his son were inestimable—but O, in his mind how worthless even those privileges, compared to this public restoration of that son to fame and honour! Shouts of gladness followed the proclamation, and the soldier quitting his father, strove to hide his emotion and manly moistened blushes by plunging into the thickest of the crowd:—but whether among that crowd he expected a soft hand to meet his trembling grasp—whether he expected there to find the softest look rejoicing in his safety—the well-known voice hailing his return—a few minutes, and they were both distant, far distant from this scene of triumph and exultation. Once more beneath his father's humble roof, Terentius whispering, called the Persian captive—wife, and she hid her face, not now in her veil, but among the leaves of his oaken crown.

Thus, said Odenathus, we again breathe from war, and I yet hope this war will end in a lasting peace. Should Sapor ha-

zard another battle, his empire is no more. Of the captives taken, we learn, that the young Hormisdas, unlike his father, is brought up by the magi, not to hate but to conciliate Palmyra. Thus in future, by meeting them half-way on friendly terms, and above all, keeping a strict and firm alliance with Rome, the security of our country is settled on the best foundation. The fate of the captives shall be decided next moon—and now in this interval of quiet, let us, my fellow-citizens, turn our attention to domestic duties. Let each individually direct well his family and private concerns, and the whole must prosper. Whatever be your trade, profession, or calling, attend to that, and leave your safety as a nation to the care of the higher powers—those powers born to instruct, to judge, to govern, and protect ye—and he pointed severally to the priests, the magistrates, the senate, and the army. Be diligent and faithful each to his own particular arrangements, which rule at pleasure, and leave to them and

to us the care of the state. Respect the laws, obey the government, pay tribute, worship the gods, and we will as now, with our lives defend ye from all enemies. Hereafter I will acquaint ye wherefore the Roman emperor was not delivered from captivity—to the senate it must be first made known. Again I repeat it—silence and vigilance—and now disperse.

He ceased—and his hearers motionless with awe, love, and admiration, still waited to catch another sound from his lips, when a voice, loud and decisive, arrested the attention of all present—we disperse not, it exclaimed, until thou hast a right to command, and we are bound to obey.

Astonishment and anger flashed into the majestic countenance of Odenathus, and astonishment was heightened, while anger gave place to the deepest concern, when he saw that the speaker was his friend Orodes. Thou Jupiter, the tremendous king of gods and men, continued Orodes, lifting up his hands and

eyes on high, dash down thy ready bolts of thunder on this head, if Odenathus be not ignorant of my coming speech—no plan, no joint contrivance hath there been—the walls, the dumb stones of Palmyra, have been my only counsellors, of which I take to witness Adrian our tutelary deity. Thou, Odenathus, added he, addressing him in the same elevated tone of voice, thou art one of us, and only one of us, a fellow-citizen—of noble birth—allowed, but here are hundreds such, no one thy superior, but all thy equals : from this moment thou hast none. Though ever a Palmyrenian, thou art no longer one of us—henceforward thou art above all—supreme. Odenathus, our general, our protector, our father, I, in the name of these thousands assembled, proclaim Palmyra an independent state—and thou, Prince of Palmyra !

The shout which followed echoed through the vault of heaven, and the cry of Odenathus prince of Palmyra ! was heard in the distant camps. The visible

and speechless emotion of Odenathus, was the best consecration of his new dignity, for words he had none. Herodian, a weak and delicate boy, could scarcely comprehend what passed—and Meonius!—at that moment Meonius could best tell the feelings of Cain when his brother's offering was accepted, and his dispersed.

Odenathus soon recovered self-possession, and as soon shewed how worthy their election, which now proved to be unanimously confirmed. Rather, said he, would I be father of our small beloved Palmyra, than emperor of the Roman world. But though Palmyra is by your decree no longer a Roman province, be it ever the most faithful ally of Rome. That people is destined by the gods for a given time, to rule the world, and opposition to their divine decree must end in self-destruction. On Gallienus recognizing our freedom and your choice, to which wisdom and policy must prompt him, he will find us the best, the strongest tower of defence of his eastern conquests—far from encroaching on

any, we will protect them in his name from Persia and Parthia. But Palmyrenians, I receive the dignity only on one condition—this day is a new, a memorable day in Syrian history, and will give rise to much happiness, or the contrary, as you this hour determine—an elective government must be ever subject to ferment and disorder—look to the Roman, where the power of election claimed by senate and army, ever keep those bodies at variance, which ought to be united in heart and interest.

He paused, and laying his hand on the head of Herodian—the nature of this boy leads to ease and a love of pleasure, more than become a son of mine. As a private citizen, such habits could not have materially, if at all, injured the state. I, a soldier from my childhood, left him wholly to the guidance of his soft mother—but now, with a glorious object in view, he may conquer this nature, and under my guidance, turn his attention to the good and happiness of the people—speak

then, Is the dignity hereditary in my family ;
is the succession secured to Herodian ?

A solemn pause ensued—Orodes looked around, and perceiving among the crowd of women and children a young boy of animated and intelligent countenance, who appeared to understand what passed, he stooped over the iron railing and took him up in his arms. The multitude well understood the intention of Orodes, and listened with profound interest for the unpremeditated answer of the child, which was to guide their answer to Odenathus. Boy, said Orodes, look up yonder at the prince—that youth standing by his knee is his son, at the death of Odenathus, shall Herodian be prince ? The child gazed earnestly, then turning quickly his beauteous countenance on Orodes, answered—Certainly, if Herodian live longer than his father.

Orodes put down the boy. Gloom and despondency spread over all, until banished by the sunshine of Odenathus' smile. Away with these supersitious fears,

my friends, he said, and be cheered by the promise I here make, to share the government with Herodian on his assuming the manly robe. But from his birth he hath been tender and delicate—say, should he die without issue, will the succession pass to my nephew?

A loud and general exclamation was heard of—No. Odenathus felt the sentence of rejection, but with no pang of self-reproach—to Meonius it came sharp as the tooth of the serpent. The succession shall be vested in thy widow, said Orodas. Widow! and my wife no more! cried Odenathus—then comprehending the meaning of Orodas, his cheek became flushed, and he waved his hand for the people to disperse, when perceiving their eyes directed to the spot where he stood on high, he turned to know the cause, and saw advancing Antiochus, Septimia, and Zenobia, who came to do homage in the name of the Palmyrenians.

A multitude ever seem actuated by one soul, and the universal cry was now

—Zenobia princess of Palmyra! Odenathus raised Antiochus and Septimia from the earth, and thanked them in a few grateful words, then turned to raise Zenobia—but on hearing the exclamation of the people, she had fled—she only raised the hem of his robe to her lips, when she instantly disappeared. Odenathus, incapable of disguise to a generous people, whom he now regarded as his children, said, To your homes, O Palmyrenians! and when next we meet, should the gods grant my wishes, Zenobia will with me stretch forth her hand to bless our people.

His words were as sun-beams on a bank of snow, and in a few minutes the streets were deserted.

Anthony thereby lost the world, said Odenathus as he followed Antiochus, whom he requested to lead him to the apartments of Septimia; I wish not to

win a world but to save my country—yet should my sword be conquered by my heart! Ere I gain I have nought to hazard—once gained, may not Palmyra find a rival in my love, and I hesitate to venture life when life is made to minister to her happiness.

Odenathus found himself in the presence of Septimia ere he was aware—he came with the avowed purpose of asking Septimia to take under her fostering care his child Herodian, and be to him a mother, but he concluded with beseeching her to be a mother to himself. His few first words explained his hopes, and confirmed Septimia the veriest wretch on earth. When recovered—be not deceived, my lord, by these emotions, had I the choice of all the—heathen, she would have said, but hesitated) chieftains of Palmyra, it would have fallen on thee, but understand my feelings—Zenobia is like me, a Hebrew.

I know it, said Odenathus, but I know also that she is yet in early youth, and capable of being moulded to any form—

pardon me, Septimia, if I declare that Zenobia may be inclined to abjure a faith so abhorred of her father and the people. Is this thy hope? asked Septimia. What but this? returned Odenathus, surprised. Though a soldier, I am perhaps more tenacious of the forms in which I have been brought up, than Apollo's high and mighty priest. One faith, one heart, one interest ours. Let my daughter be sought, said Septimia, to her attendants, who quitted the chamber—then to Antiochus, thou wilt keep thy promise—Zenobia will ever be free to refuse or accept? And on Antiochus answering—then, continued she, my courage revives, love will sooner make the prince embrace Judaism, than ambition induce her to turn Pagan. Ambition! repeated the proud Antiochus, conscious that his birth and wealth placed Zenobia on a level with Odenathus, even since his accession to regal power.

But should I be accepted, interrupted Odenathus, gracefully addressing Septimia, I trust that ambition will not be the

inducement. Here Zenobia appeared, and Odenathus rose to meet her. My child, said Antiochus, leading her forward, our princely general asks thee of us in marriage—thine heart is thine own to bestow, give or refuse as itself shall dictate. I leave thee with thy mother, who will communicate to me thy resolution.

Zenobia stirred not from the spot where her father had left her. She leaned one arm on the statue against which she stood, her eyes fixed on the ground, and in the other hand held the book she had been perusing ere she entered. Septimia continued her work, but the work was performed by a trembling and unconscious hand.

Thou art chosen, dear Zenobia, said Odenathus at length, by the unanimous voice of the Palmyrenians—wilt thou disappoint them? — It appears I am chosen, Odenathus, replied the blushing Zenobia, by the unanimous voice of the Palmyrenians, wilt *thou* disappoint them?

I cannot pretend to misunderstand thee, he replied, gratified and honoured as I feel by this veiled acknowledgment that there is but one impediment to our union. Hitherto it appears thou hast been educated in the same belief with thy mother, a disciple of Elkanah thy uncle, a follower of the Hebrews, one of that nation called Jewish——Let me conclude the list of my titles, said Zenobia, for the first time raising her head—the disbeliever of many gods, the hater of paganism, the abhorrer of idols, the true and everlasting worshipper of one only God,—the God of Abraham. Odenathus suddenly let fall the hand he held, and Zenobia looked stedfastly upon him—O what a subject for the skill of the statuary !

Septimia raised her eyes from her work, but had not power to speak. She saw that Odenathus was on the point of quitting the room, yet spell-bound by the presence of Zenobia, attempted in vain to fly. Recovered from his first amazement at the firmness with which she

declared her faith, he endeavoured to soften his disappointment by a smile, saying, A soldier should neither fly the field of battle nor argument, had I Antiochus here to support my cause I should not dread, yet with such feeble weapons as I possess, I fear not to meet Zenobia.—Say then, Zenobia, why reject the gods of thy country, to worship an unknown deity?

An unknown deity, repeated Zenobia, and how unknown?—Because never seen, he replied.—True, most true, there indeed thou gainst one advantage over me—for not one of thy deities but have been on earth, and though not seen by thyself were of thy ancestors—all, it is true, the departed spirits of heroes and benefactors of mankind—Hermes or Mercury, I think, thou callest him, was a king of Egypt—Saturn, Apollo, and Jupiter were great princes in those times, and what a multitude of deified mortals has not Rome alone produced! all made gods at their death, and now worshipped as such—the god Nero, the god Commodus,

the god Domitian—they have all their temples, priests, vestals, and sacrifices—this point I yield, so thou wilt tell me who made these heroes and benefactors, or rather explain to me the origin of all things visible.

Is it the music of thy voice, or the lustre of thine eyes, that deprive me of the power of answering?—Neither, but perhaps the dawn of conviction, and I have not spoken five minutes.—Then, said he, ere dawn give place to sunrise I quit the field, convinced that the mere soldier should never attempt to wield the arms of controversy. — Thou thinkest then, that there is a sun and that it will rise, stay Odenathus, and let the first beam touch thy reason and dispel the mist of error in which it is enveloped.—She walked over to the table where sat her mother, and opening a book, said, Approach, and look on this—though thou canst not inform me of the origin of our world, I, by means of this one line, can instruct thee.—And she read, ‘ In the be-

ginning God created the heaven and the earth'—thus we not only read of the beginning of all things, but of him who was before the beginning.

She paused, and Odenathus confused, bewildered—knew not what to answer.—Press no further, said Septimia, for the heart of the prince is now too deeply interested to leave reason its proper sway—Odenathus, thankful for this relief, rose hastily, saying, Most true, my heart, indeed is deeply interested; public duties likewise, at this hour, lay claim to my attention; permit me to peruse this book at leisure, and I promise not to slight it; but in the mean time, may I cherish the hope, that the wishes of thy father and our Palmyra will be fulfilled?

No; replied Zenobia, cherish none, I do not wish to bias thy judgment, or sway thy mind contrary to the dictates of reason, neither will I break my faith to God, by plighting it to an unbeliever.—Odenathus stood dismayed, for he now saw that nothing but his own change of

belief could induce her to be his.—Then I have gained no influence over thy heart? —None.—Yet, though thou hast refused to share the sceptre of Palmyra, thou seemdst to bid me hope.—Hast thou not answered thyself? asked Septimia—and am I to expect no other sign of preference? —Is not accepting thee, a sign sufficient? expect no other from Zenobia.—Leave us, Odenathus, and when thy mind is more at ease, let us see thee again.—Pardon me, he replied, since this is thy daughter's determination, better, at this moment, come to a final decision.—Speak, Zenobia, may I hope that, with respect to faith, time will shake thy resolution.

Time, will but confirm it, she answered, trust not either to persuasions, for, after this hour, I argue no more with thee—think not that ambition will sway me—it cannot, for I am thy equal.—My equal! interrupted Odenathus, O Zenobia! thus to exalt, yet reject me! Neither, she continued, expect that authority of any kind will have weight; my mother

is, as you know, of the same belief, and my father, as thou wert witness, left me the disposal of my hand.—Then thus we part, said Odenathus mournfully.—We do, and on this subject meet no more, for when I forsake the God of the universe, the Protector of my nation, may the power of choice and resolution forsake me.

Odenathus bowed to Septimia, and casting one look on Zenobia, quitted the room. Oh, thought Septimia, that I, thus situated, had been equally firm, equally pious!—This was the moment to read the heart of her daughter.—She looked up, she marked the crimson cheek, she met the swimming eyes of Zenobia, and the next instant clasped her in her arms.—Long with tender, yet silent caresses, she hung over this darling of her soul, and then with consoling look and voice, said, But, my child, he will not renew his application, for he never will abjure his faith.—Oh, my mother, replied Zenobia with exultation, I have that noble heart here in my hand, it is mine and for life,

and having it for life, it is mine through all eternity.—Thou art surprised, my mother, Odenathus himself thinks with thee that he has for ever renounced me, but he is bound firmer than ever.—Had he now yielded, or should he soon yield, he would be rejected of me as the hypocrite, or the slave of passion—let him resist, avoid, sacrifice me to his idea of virtue, of *his* religion—let him struggle long, and yield only to conviction, with imagination cool, and judgment exercised, then am I his—if worth the obtaining.

And shouldst thou deceive thyself—led by vanity or inclination, shouldst thou be deceived herein.—And even so! said Zenobia, with more dignity in her manner, than was usual when addressing her mother.—I did not intend to hurt thy feelings, my child, replied Septimia tenderly, but shouldst thou follow my example—Oh marry not idolatry, in the delusive hope of converting thy husband:—that was my fond error—it may succeed, but the consequences are too dread-

ful to hazard—thou well knowst what were the consequences to me.—

They were here interrupted, by some one approaching, and Septimia ceased speaking, but perceiving that it was her brother, Elkanah, she continued—Though often solicited to abjure my faith, I remained unshaken, convinced that ours is the only true religion—at least I knew of none preferable—Zenobia, thou wilt never be persuaded to renounce it?—Elkanah, all alarm, on hearing of the application of Odenathus, fearful that Zenobia could not withstand the united wishes of her father, the prince, and the Palmyrenians hastened hither, yet with slow and stately demeanour, concealing apprehension under the veil of cold austerity.—On Septimia repeating her question—Elkanah, who had seated himself at the table, his head resting on his hand, looked up as waiting her answer. — She was standing near where lay the open scriptures, her eyes fixed upon them, when Elkanah, unable longer to hide his fears,

stretched over the table, saying, Swear by that, here, on this sacred page, swear to acknowledge no other faith than ours; swear never to renounce the Jewish faith.

Zenobia was still silent; she slowly raised her eyes to those of her mother, and perceiving that therein which she never could refuse, prepared to comply, when the door gently opening, there appeared at it Herodian, the young son of Odenathus, sent by his father to thank Septimia for her promise of becoming to him a second mother. The hand of Zenobia being at that moment extended, Herodian mistook the purpose for a wish for him to come forward; since his mother's death, he had been indulgently noticed by both, and he now ran and seized the extended hand, kissing it with words of thanks suiting his age and meek disposition, and then enquired for Victoria, a young maiden a few years older than himself, to whom he was fondly attached.

Pronounce the oath, said Elkanah,

sternly, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the boy, would have repulsed him. Herodian, timid and easily affrighted, shrunk from the rude grasp of Elkanah, and clung yet closer to Zenobia. Obey thy mother, and swear!—Zenobia endeavoured to release her hand; Septimia called Herodian to come to her, whilst the exasperated Elkanah, proceeding to remove him by force, defeated his own purpose: Herodian, all terror and dismay at this reception, so violent and unexpected, grasped Zenobia with strength she could not repel.

She paused, and fondly looked upon him—ever fond, but now her feelings were almost maternal. Is this chance or premeditation? Is it—O can it be a warning from heaven? What! to confirm me in the only true religion—make me ever avoid paganism? And is ours the only true one? What other?—The Christian:—but that——My mother is no christian. Her silence was long, and ended in a steady resolution to decline

the oath—On that subject I will be responsible to God alone. Then, as quitting the room, and leading the terrified boy, she added, My mother, set thy mind at ease concerning me; and to ensure that ease, send without delay for Longinus; Herodian and I will begin our studies with him, and ere six months, I, of the two, promise to be the best Greek scholar.

The image of Zenobia was for a short time effaced from the mind of Odenathus, and he wholly devoted himself to the high concerns of his new office. The military affairs of the province were entrusted to Zabdas; those of the city, comprising the militia, he left to Balista and Victorinus, whilst he devoted himself to others more congenial to his philosophic, mild, and peaceful disposition. He examined into the interior policy of the state, confirmed, abolished, and framed laws, and made himself personally and familiarly ac-

acquainted with most of the heads of families. Nothing to him appeared degrading or laborious, if conducive to the happiness of his people: by turns, as their interest required, Odenathus was a sun in meridian splendour, or obscured by clouds, or wholly eclipsed.

The freedom of Palmyra had been acknowledged by Rome, and thus strengthened, Odenathus in a short time proved to his adoring subjects, that benignant power, in the hands of a virtuous sovereign, is the most perfect form of government on earth, the nearest imitation of the government of heaven. Not only the city of Palmyra was greatly enlarged and beautified, but those of Thapsacus, Emessa, Apamea, Larissa and others were much improved. Preferring peace to war, he by valour ensured peace, for none now dared attack a province governed by a general hitherto invincible. Aware of this, many of his troops were disbanded, conscious that the rearing of his standard (the native palm) would be

the signal for Palmyrene to appear in arms: and for a few months, he resigned himself solely to promoting the prosperity of his dominions.

But whilst dispensing blessings around him, was his own heart to remain longer unblessed? That noble heart, which Zenobia had foretold should yet be hers, at every interval fondly returned to the being by which it was enthralled; and though each morning he resolved to conquer his inclination, and shun the palace of Antiochus, every evening beheld him there a welcome guest.

On what hath Septimia been so long employed? enquired Antiochus; and say, for whom is this tapestry designed?—For thy future son-in-law, replied Septimia, smiling, and she continued giving directions to her maidens, regardless of Odenathus, who stood behind her husband.—Rely on me, said the prince to Antiochus, as he was departing; suffer me to make one more attempt: should I succeed, thy daughter abjures her faith, and becomes

mine, or I renounce her for ever, and form an alliance with Rome.

Zenobia heard the words which Odenathus wished she should, and went over to her mother's frame; Odenathus followed, and in silence sat down on the other side of Septimia, where, on the table, lay the same book which had occasioned him so much perplexity when first preferring his suit.

He had been occupied many minutes in carelessly turning over the pages, his mind far otherwise engaged, when, hastily rising, he was shutting it, but was prevented by Zenobia, who, placing her hand on the open page, again read—

‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;’ thus must all things have a beginning, and thou hast now began the first page of the volume of truth. This is a Syriac translation of our bible, which bible contains five books called the Pentateuch—the history of our nation from the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, a pe-

riod of three thousand years, compiled by the prophets, the prophets themselves from Isaiah to Malachi, and four books of hymns and divine precepts. Here is also a new Greek translation of a few chapters of Genesis, rendered at my desire by Longinus; and who ever yet refused to read the writings of Longinus?

Odenathus hesitating, reluctantly cast his eyes on the page, and long was silent. Zenobia, as she worked, watched his countenance, and saw apathy and indifference gradually vanish. 'Let there be light, and there was light,' I do not recollect in any other author a more sublime expression; and as his eye wandered over lines of the purest language ever penned, he still gave praise to Longinus.—So much to the translator, and none to the author, none to the Inspirer? enquired Septimia.

'And God saw that it was good'—to what does that refer? said he, looking back. To the separation of waters and

earth. It occurs again—again, and here, a third, fourth, and fifth time; ‘God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was good.’ Are then earthquakes, fires, pestilence, and death good? Septimius then addressed him—Sin is certainly not good, neither did sin and its consequences proceed from God; all that he gave was good for thou hast yet to read, that with sin came those dreadful changes in the material world: evil was not the gift of heaven, and in the golden age, this world was a heaven on earth.

And how long did this state of bliss continue? enquired Odenathus, turning over the leaves; the events occupy three chapters only.—A short period!—Thy calculation shows more of the soldier than the philosopher, remarked Zenobia. The golden age was an age, one hundred years; thus, from the creation of the world to the destruction thereof, was two thousand years, and yet the history of that period is contained in seven chapters.—And how dost thou prove, Ze-

nobia, that thus long Paradise was enjoyed?—We know not, she replied, how long the exact space was wherein the first state of innocence and happiness flourished with a full and perfect union—perhaps not long, but it was longer far before the world witnessed the foul crime of Cain, and before all traces of primæval happiness were worn out by successive follies and enormities.

Look at what period Cain, Abel, and Seth were born, and at the age of Adam when he died.—Were these the only children of this first man and woman?—No; they had many others, replied Septimia, sons and daughters, as reason must convince thee, who gradually peopled the land of Uz, the land of Nod, and other places adjoining the country of Damascus, where our first parents dwelt after their expulsion from Paradise.

And this, remarked Odenathus, is the Hebrew account of the golden age? We have also ours. Though a Syrian by

birth, I am, as you know, by education, a Roman; not the god of the Arab is mine, but the gods of Hesiod and of Homer. Thy Adam and his wife, it seems, were created in innocence; why did not their Maker preserve them thus, why leave them the power to disobey?

This enemy to man, continued Odenathus, this serpent, here for the first time introduced to our knowledge, is this an allegory?—No, said Septimia, neither is it the first mention of Satan; for we have a book written by a man who lived before Moses, the writer of this—And why not insert it in its proper place, to render clearer these pages?—Would that be in order? returned Septimia. What can come before the creation, of which Moses was the first who undertook the account? To those conversant in the scriptures, it occasions no confusion, and others will, in this age of knowledge, ever meet a friendly hand to guide them.—Of which I am an instance, replied Odenathus. But this book—where is it to be

found, and by whom was it written?—By Job, a prince great in power and riches, who lived not long after the deluge; here is, correctly speaking, the first mention of the serpent, the enemy of man.

Zenobia would have closed the book to which she had referred, when Odenathus prevented her, and with earnest and eager curiosity, he read, nor ceased until he had rapidly perused the whole. No, said he, from the hour I first voluntarily opened the page of knowledge, never did I meet the equal of this. Sublime and admirable! and never before to meet my eye! Having read those pages, continued he, turning back to Genesis, these are now better understood.

Odenathus continued to peruse in silence, and then remarked, A Redeemer is here promised—woman to be subject to man until the coming of that Redeemer—a virgin mother. Is that promise yet to be fulfilled? And what am I to understand by this—Enoch walked with God—he was not, for God took him?—That he

was taken up to heaven whilst yet alive; said Zenobia—that he never saw death; the intention of which might be to show to mankind, the original design of the merciful Creator, and his power to take both body and soul united, to bliss everlasting.

Noah, of the race of Seth, remarked Odanathus, must have been inspired to do thus by the Author of the flood, or others would also have built ships, and saved themselves; incredulity, it appears, was the cause of their destruction, for they were forewarned. This event answers to our Saturn and Deucalion—‘I will not again drown the world.’ It is now above four thousand years since this promise was given, and no second deluge has come upon it; the promise hath hitherto been kept.—On leaving the ark, said Zenobia, the world must have appeared to Noah and his family as newly created; perfectly conscious of their previous existence, they descended from the clouds, emerged from darkness, and land-

ed in a glorious country, freed of wild beasts and noxious animals, a country of which they had sole dominion : and, Odenathus, we can best tell what the natural excellencies of that spot where they settled on leaving the said ark. I was reared in Armenia ; at the foot of Mount Ararat is Zaantha—on that dear monut, scene of my childish days, memory often fondly dwells.

Odenathus, his hand upon the page, looked at Zenobia ; I will ere long visit Armenia, said he, and continued reading—The world divided between the three sons of Noah—Ham has incurred a malediction, Shem gained a blessing, and Japheth is promised an enlargement of worldly possessions. And how is this division ascertained ?—By history, said Zenobia, and that most accurately ; the descendants of Ham peopled Africa, those of Japheth, Europe, and the chosen race of Shem, Asia.—And why distinguished by the title of the chosen ? enquired Odenathus.—Because, replied Septimia,

from his posterity will come the promised Redeemer, the son of the virgin mother.

The tower of Babel, said Odenathus—of this there can be no doubt, for *we* record an event exactly similar; that of the giants heaping mountains to scale the walls of heaven, and being frustrated in their impious attempt by the thunders of Jupiter.—Thus, observed Zenobia, thou makest the truth of our sacred records depend on thy incredible mythology. Is it not easier to build a tower of brick, than hurl mountains through the air? And if thou doubtest those words, do not disbelieve thine eyes; and she unlocked a cabinet. Here are the reeds I gathered from between the bricks of the remains of the tower of Babel. Nineveh is dissolved, but that yet stands a gigantic monument of art and impiety, on the banks of the Euphrates, now the resort of wild beasts, where the kings of Persia take the diversion of hunting.

Abram, said Odenathus, or Abraham,

is, I observe, selected as the head of a distinct nation; thy nation Zenobia.— And thine Odenathus, she replied.—I a Hebrew am descended from Isaac, and thou an Arab from his brother Ishmael.—by education, though the worshipper of many gods; by descent the worshipper of one, and that the true God. Odenathus read on in silence, and was often observed to shake his head as not well pleased. These Patriarchs, said he, addressing Septimia, are not the perfect models of virtue, I expected to find them.—Not one, excepting this named Joseph is free from blemish—in all the rest there is recorded something to blame, actions highly deserving censure.—Septimia replied not.

Oh excellent eulogium on the candour and veracity of the historian! exclaimed Zenobia, who thus instead of falsely colouring, or wholly omitting the transgressions of his forefathers, records truths, and thus shews human nature as it really is—but peruse those chapters

again, and thou wilt see transgression wholly obscured by superior virtues.—Odenathus complied, and after a rapid and slight perusal of the remaining four books of the Pentateuch closed the volume —I now fully comprehend the circumstances detailed from the creation to the death of Moses; a period comprehending a vast lapse of time.—And yet said Zenobia, that vast lapse of time was only seven generations.—Seven! exclaimed Odenathus. Even so; seven men who progressively saw each other face to face: Adam, Methusalah, Shem (otherwise Melchisedeck), Jacob, Kohath, his grandson Moses, and Joshua.—Adam related the particulars of the creation and his fall to Methusalah—to this, Shem, when instructing Jacob, added the account of the deluge—Jacob again in addition told to Kohath the minutest circumstances relative to his own family.—Moses was brought upon the knee of Kohath, and Joshua was the bosom friend of Moses: The truth of this were well worthy rigorous

enquiry and examination, replied Odenathus rising, and how great my triumph on proving Zenobia in an error,—here I pronounce, in the presence of her mother, not to forego the reward of my triumph.—Septimia smiled at his gallant threat, whilst the crimsoned cheeks of Zenobia sought to hide themselves amongst the embroidered flowers growing beneath her skilful hand.

And on what art thou engaged, enquired Odenathus, leaning over the frame of Septimia, What is this worked text thus encircled with garlands?—Tapestry designed for the study of Zenobia, she replied, a room devoted by her to solitude and prayer—I have also hangings to present to thee for a like purpose—her's, as thou seest, are compleated; the subject of thine is only sketched on paper, and she presented it to him. Odenathus, without looking at the paper in his hand, read the words woven in the tapestry:—‘Thou shalt have none other gods but me’.—Now said Zenobia, read the first

commandment in thy law, and he read:—
'Thou shalt have many gods, or rather thou shalt personify every human passion and pay it divine honours.' Having perused our second ordinance—peruse thine.
—'Thou shalt carefully make to thyself images in gold and silver, in ivory, wood, and brass; and when painted, gilded, and polished, shalt bow down to them and adore them—the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, are also deities, and as such claim worship.'

He was proceeding, when stopped by Septimia, who said, Lay aside that paper, read only this tapestry, and represent to yourself eight more commandments, enjoining what these prohibit.—Is not this a fair explanation of the Pagan law?

Must I then confess, said Odenathus, re-seating himself, that since I was last here, led by my heart or my judgment, thou Septimia shalt determine, I have conversed with thy brother Elkanah, one Paulus, a learned man of Sarmosata, and Irenius, the Christian pastor of Palmyra—but subtle

casuists and deep reasoners, can make little impression on a mind wholly ignorant, until lately of the foundation of your belief.—No; I would prefer simple truths, explained in simple language, you must not then consider me an overgrown scholar, but discourse with me as you would with Herodian—do not attempt, to raise my capacity to your's; but deign to lower your explanation to my comprehension.—Why did Moses, the Jewish legislator, brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians, why did he not rather embrace the faith of his royal reputed mother, than that of the enslaved Hebrew?

Hast thou not remarked, asked Zenobia, that Providence committed the care of his early years to his own parents? Was not truth sown early in his heart, leaving no room for tares.—Had I been educated in Palmyra I had, perhaps, been pagan; but reared by a Jewish mother, what other faith could possibly be mine? The religion of Moses once firmly established, all the learning he afterwards

acquired, but served to confirm it; incapable of change. The more he studied nature, the greater his belief in the God of nature.

And wherefore were the Israelites thus inhumanly treated by the Egyptians? Methinks the memory of Joseph, their great benefactor, should have been more respected.—And doubtless it would, replied Septimia, had the crown of Egypt continued in the same family, but though not mentioned in scripture, tradition informs us, that the country was, in after ages, conquered by a neighbouring king, who, as customary, took the name of Pharaoh.—The miracles then performed were wonderful!—this of passing through the Red Sea.—Does not this globe we stand on, asked Zenobia, turn round every four and twenty hours, yet neither the beds of the ocean are emptied, nor the dry land inundated.—The same power which at the creation, said to the oceans, ‘Keep your bounds,’ and at the flood, ‘Overflow your bounds,’ said to the waters of the

Red Sea ; and afterwards to those of Jordan — ‘ Divide. Be stationary as a wall to the right and to the left.’ And why, asked Odenathus, if Moses did write these five books, why doth he thus speak *of* himself instead of speaking in his own person ?—Why, demanded Zenobia, why does Cæsar in his Commentaries speak of himself instead of speaking in his own person. — Odenathus, turning over the leaves, continued—This utter extirpation of the inhabitants of Canaan, and seizure of their lands under Joshua——Was but the extirpation of idolatry, said Septimia, and taking possession of the inheritance promised by the Lord, the rightful owner of the land, to Shem the blessed son of Noah, which inheritance had been usurped by the hardened and iniquitous sons of Ham.—Moreover, destruction came not upon them unawares—as certain as Noah preached repentance, and was disregarded, and the flood came down, the nations of Canaan were warned against the consequences of idolatry, which slighting, they

were delivered up to the sword of the Israelite.—God is an impartial God, he visited his favoured nation, the Israelite with many evils, and spared the righteous, regardless wheresoever born.

The possession of this land was given to Abraham's posterity, remarked Odenathus—the promise is repeatedly made, was it ever literally and amply fulfilled—and at what period?—In the reign of Solomon, replied Zenobia—whose alliance was courted by the greatest sovereigns, and whose dominions stretched from Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from Phœnicia to Egypt—in power, wisdom, and magnificence, far exceeding any other earthly prince. Our nation, from the time of Joshua to the death of the last of the Maccabees, was a great nation, but from that period all has been calamity. Our government passed away, our priesthood set aside, and our people scattered over the habitable earth—not honoured, but tolerated—the character wholly changed, dwelling among the gen-

tiles, strictly speaking with trembling heart, failing of eyes, sorrow of mind—the life of the Hebrew, wherever fate hath cast him, ever hangs in doubt—in the morning he says would it were even, and at even would it were morning—Rome, Egypt, and Cæsar's western conquests, are filled with these outcasts.—Oh blessed the power which shall hear their cry for aid, which shall gather them together, and make them once again a nation! — And her expressive look was turned on the prince.

Odenathus, much affected, took her hand, saying, what wouldst thou have me do? Abjure paganism and embrace our faith. There is our code of laws, and she pointed to the tapestry. Declare without hesitation, thy belief in one God, and thy heart hath adopted the first commandment. The second, relative to the worship of graven images, reminds us of what but lately we witnessed near Julian's pillar—a multitude collected round thy statue, paying it reverence and homage,

whilst thou, the living Odenathus, at the same moment passed by them unnoticed.

When thy belief in the Almighty shall be fully established, added Septimia, thou canst not but acknowledge that so sacred a name should never, as witness or protector be improperly invoked. The fourth enjoins us to keep holy the Sabbath day. Under thy mild government, the first of every month is a sabbath or day of rest, and if perverse to his own peace and comfort, any transgress in this, he is punished with the same severity as the man who refuses to contribute his labour one day in the week to the public welfare. I need not, she affectionately continued, enforce the fifth or seventh commandments on Odenathus, from his youth upwards justly named the Pious—but do not neglect enforcing them on the minds of thy subjects. The sixth, said Zenobia, is here written, ‘Thou shalt do no murder,’ but the words of the text are, ‘Thou shalt not kill;’ and herein the sense doth not widely differ, for all killing in an evil cause,

without the pleas of justice, and the privilege of self-defence, or without the forms and sentence of righteous laws (all which have the sanction of the Lord) is murder. Oh be Odenathus in future as he has hitherto proved himself, the first promoter of defensive, not the encourager of offensive war!—rather be the shield than the sword. ‘Thou shalt do no murder!’—her voice trembled—she paused—a deep sigh burst from her lips, and her face was bathed in tears.

Septimia alarmed arose, and hastened to her relief; Odenathus, equally surprised and agitated, started from his seat—but Zenobia recovering herself, declined any assistance, saying, This is to convince thee Odenathus, that thou art not conversing with learned rabbis, but simple woman, whom a sun-beam cherishes into smiles, and a drop of rain dissolves in tears. May that God on whom we are striving to fix thy heart, preserve thy life!—and again her face was concealed in her veil.

Septimia, anxious to divert the atten-

tion of Odenathus from Zenobia, that she might gain time wholly to conquer her feelings thus unaccountably agitated, continued—The eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments, on due reflection, must convince thee that religion is the best safeguard of peace and worldly possessions.—‘Do not steal—Do not bear false witness—Do not covet.’ Now Odenathus setting aside the divine origin of these laws, and the awful and terrific circumstances attending their promulgation, could a more perfect system of morality be invented, in order to secure to man his happiness individually or collectively? And wherefore, asked Odenathus, were they given under these terrific circumstances? Never, said Zenobia, doth thunder roll, lightning dart, profound obscurity come over all things, but I think on this our decalogue—the bow of heaven was adopted as a sign that while that was visible, no second deluge could destroy the world, and thus was the storm perhaps singled out to keep in memory

the law ; whirlwinds, earthquakes and lightning seem to repeat these sacred Ten, and thunder menace such as break them.

And now, Odenathus, added Septimia, thou art informed of the whole system of our faith ; thou art surprised, yet this is all. We believe in one God ; we are bound to keep these, and we look for the coming of the Messiah. With respect to our various sacrifices, offerings, and ceremonies, consult Paulus or Elkanah ; expect from us only the explanation of our three principal festivals. The Feast of the Passover is to commemorate the Lord passing over, or sparing the children of the Israelites, when he in one night slew all the first-born of Egypt. The Feast of the Pentecost is in memory of the giving of this law to Moses on Mount Sinai, when also the first-fruits of wheat-harvest are offered to the divine Giver ; and the Feast of the Tabernacles, held in the time of the vintage, reminds us of the period when our forefathers

wandering forty years in the deserts, lived in tents and booths. There are, I allow, many others, of which Elkanah can best inform thee; but be not disgusted with his learned harangues, or yield too much credit to what he, I verily believe, prefers to the scriptures: a book he perhaps shewed thee, the Talmud, in which the traditions of our ancestors, some sixty years back, were recorded by a rabbi of Tiberias, many of which are valuable, and others want the basis of truth.

And this is all? repeated Odenathus. Thus hast thou in few words reduced to order what I until lately regarded as a confused mass of contradictions. I have sometimes pitied the Hebrews, enslaved to ceremonies; when are those of thy nation to cease?—At the coming of the Messiah, replied Septimia, who is to be our judge, redeemer, saviour, and king; he will gather together the scattered tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the remnant of the others, and restore them to their land, and to the land its city, its

Jerusalem: then will our suffering nation, warned by the dreadful judgments that have already fallen, worship God in spirit and in truth, and be again under him in power and majesty, the glory of the East.

And the Christian? said Odenathus, hesitatingly. — The Christian, returned Zenobia, denies this interpretation, and herein lies the great point of difference between their faith and ours: they assert that the gathering of the tribes means conversion to their belief; they preach, that the Messiah having already appeared, a temple made with hands is no longer the residence of Jehovah: but we know otherwise; we know that the gathering of our nation will be literally fulfilled, therefore look forward with hope to the rebuilding of the habitation of God, and it will be rebuilt.

I fear, said Odenathus, charmed by the fire of religious enthusiasm which shone in her eyes, and glowed on her countenance—I fear that ere long I shall

number among my people more Jews than Pagans; and now must I acknowledge that I have thought on this subject more deeply than either were aware, for with Irenius, the Christian pastor, I have held much discourse: he is a plain, inoffensive man, who, satisfied in his own belief, seeks not to inspire others with the same; his manners are harmless, timid, and wavering. Just such a character I would wish the head of the Christians, for the lasting security of Pagan or Jewish faith; for to the satisfactory answers he gave to my enquiries, could he have added ardour and fervency, I might perhaps be in no danger of embracing Judaism. And now suffer me to question you. The prophets of your nation predicted the last dispersion of the tribes, and the destruction of Jerusalem; was this prediction to be fulfilled previous to the coming of the Messiah, or subsequent to that event? What do your scriptures say of this expected Saviour? Where is he to be born? at what period

of time? Of which tribe will he spring? What are to be his functions, his character? What do the prophets say thereon? How is he to redeem you, and from what—from sin or temporal subjection? How restore you, and establish you as a kingdom—by force of arms or miracle?

We are not doctors of the law, replied Zenobia, to point out each distinct prophecy; be satisfied therefore with an answer brief as true. According to the prophets, he is to come of the tribe of Judah, of the royal lineage of David, and be born at Bethlehem of Judea.—And is it not foretold, enquired Odenathus, that the same person, though in the latter days triumphant and glorious, will yet undergo sufferings and humiliation; that he will be despised and rejected of man, yet that his kingdom and dominion shall have no end? Then, after a pause, he added, I have come into the world too soon; would that I had been reserved for the appearance of thy Messiah, or been born after his time! for I feel a

vacancy, an unsatisfied desire — this is all well ; my mind begins to comprehend, but my heart wants an object to rest upon.

Why not, asked Septimia, be satisfied in expectation, as were the prophets and many of the most virtuous men of our nation ?—True, said Odenathus ; but with me, retrospection is most gratifying.—The words, the remarks of Odenathus, struck forcibly the eager imagination of Zenobia ; until this hour, her thoughts had never wandered that way, but now they appeared to her as originally her own : and she sat meditating on the confused ideas to which his suggestions had given rise, when, shortly after, religion gave place to affairs of state, and attention wholly turned to a messenger from Rome.

Odenathus received and opened the dispatches ; Septimia and Zenobia would have retired, and never would their absence have been noticed, but at the door they stopped, and gently returned to their

seats. Through the open arcades was seen advancing the whole body of senators full-robed, headed by Orodes, followed by a deputation from the people. Having arranged themselves around the spacious apartment, they fixed their eyes on Odenathus, who, wholly taken up with the letters received, at first saw not their entrance. Read these, said he to Orodes, presenting them.—Pardon me, sir, if I refuse until thou art informed of what hath this day passed the senate. Prince of Palmyra was but a limited title, the first step to supreme power—with that power thou art now invested: this morning the senate, the army, and the people, with one consent, declared thee King of the East.

And King of the West, it appears also, said Odenathus, for here is my charter from Gallienus: in full Roman senate, I am declared Augustus, his co-partner in the empire, and sharer in the purple. It gave me little exultation, for I preferred the inferior, though more be-

loved title of Prince of Palmyra; but since elected by my own people, I accept the offered throne, the empire, and its diadem.

Orodes had anticipated his answer: the train of information had been previously laid by Caleb—it spread a rapid flame of delight through the expecting city, and at the moment that the prince drew his sword to swear on it love and fidelity to Palmyra, the universal cry was heard of—Odenathus, King of the East!

Septimia and her daughter were the only women present, and had there been a thousand, Zenobia alone would have engrossed every eye. Odenathus fixed his on her, and his speechless suit was majestic, graceful, and tender; the golden sceptre placed in his hand by Orodes, he gave into hers; whilst she taking the general's staff presented by Antiochus, and wrapping round it the silken tapestry containing the Mosaic law, offered it to him. He paused, then took it, softly saying, Zenobia, queen of my choice!—

Zenobia, our Queen ! loudly exclaimed Orodes, and Zenobia, Queen of the East ! was passed from voice to voice, and echoed by half a million.

She looked around, and but that the blushing graces of youth softened the majesty of that brilliant look, it could not have been stedfastly met. She withdrew her hand from that of Odenathus, and laying it on the sword he yet grasped, If I accept the glory of regal power, I accept also its perils. I do not feel exalted, the circumstances of my birth entitling me, and me alone of all the land, to fill this envied station. I share the sword equally with the sceptre, not receiving half the empire, but enjoying the whole with Odenathus, who hath thus selected me from the female world, and here most solemnly promise to rule, love, and defend Palmyrene with mutual zeal and affection.

The joy of the heathen spectators was frantic, that of the Jewish filled with selfish hope and exultation, whilst

the little band of Christians, headed by their pastor, lowly, meek, and humble, looked at her, and then at each other, softly murmuring, Oh, that she were a Christian!

Elkanah, Antiochus, and Orodes gave the signals previously determined on. The gardens were thrown open, and in an instant were filled with Palmyrenians; the curtains of the open side of the apartment were wholly drawn aside, and thus was gratified every joyful eye; in the grounds, forming a noble amphitheatre, were arranged, by the direction of Zabdus and Victorinus, the various bodies of the people, classed according to their occupation, all in festive garments; and behind, on an eminence, stood unarmed troops wreathed with laurel. Not a heart but burned with rapture on witnessing the mutual crowning of Odenathus and Zenobia. He placed the tiara on her head—she the golden diadem on his; Zenobia took the sword tendered to her by her father, and girded it on Odena-

thus—he received a small and beauteous scymitar from Orodes, and clasped it on the waist of his queen; ivory thrones were brought forward; and in the sight of their subjects, they plighted mutual faith.

The contract had been signed, and the ceremony long over, ere Odenathus well knew that he had for ever abjured paganism, and embraced the religion of Zenobia.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

ZENOBIA,

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

Reflections on the present state of Palmyra—The return of Odenathus and Zenobia from Persia—Orosanga a Persian captive condemned—Valerius dispossessed of his government of Arethusa, and Harmadrian appointed in his stead — The seditious artificer in brass spoken to by the King—The enmity of two merchants named Artamon and Dionysius.—The return of Cassimus, a wood cutter from the desert—The prison of Palmyra—Herodian offers half his Persian spoils to Meonius—Victoria married to Herodian—The visit of Odenathus to the guard house.

FOUR years are gone by, and now say, Elkanah, are thy hopes fulfilled?—In part they are; for thy policy being contrary to the usual policy of those of thy

nation, the union, brought about by thy means, hath greatly spread the Jewish faith, and this day, by the example of Odenathus and Zenobia, hundreds are rescued from idolatry.—O that thy zeal had been exerted in a better cause !—Thy personal views are yet to be accomplished, and how with thee doth time linger, until, in imagination a second Nehemiah, thou shalt be sent governor of Judea !

Orodes, art thou contented ? Yea, verily ; thou hast not a wish ungratified.—Procurator of thy beloved Palmyra and president of a tribe, thou art now amply rewarded for thy services to Odenathus.—Antiochus speak thou, what more canst wish ?—Paganism has indeed received a fatal blow by the conversion of Odenathus ; but is not thy family exalted, —thy daughter raised to empire ?—And Septimia ?—O Septimia, hitherto thou hast no cause to regret Zaantha ; thy child, the beloved wife of the excellent Odenathus, and the mother of children, dear to her, as Zenobia is still to thee.

Thus Elkanah hath gained some hundred Jewish proselytes. —Orodes established a kingdom, and Antiochus immortalized his name—Septimia is happy, Zenobia honoured, Odenathus worshipped —And in what period is Palmyra thus blessed?—Seven years more—but seven—O God! what are nations in thy sight! What the world, the universe, but grains of earth and drops of water in the palm of thy hand?—Seven years more, and where these men—where Septimia and her daughter—where Palmyra itself?

The fourth year concluded with the return of Odenathus and Zenobia from the third Persian war—and who the secret instigator of these wars—what his motive? Elkanah: well knowing that mind and time otherwise employed, his sovereigns would have no leisure for religious examinations, he was the hidden agent who ever sounded a loud alarm of war, whilst others were disposed to sink slumbering in the arms of peace. By his crafty management, no Christian was per-

mitted to cross the threshold of the palace.—Zenobia, engaged by new duties, was content to abide in the faith she had been reared, and Odenathus had rejected any other faith than that of Zenobia. Yet, though neither had advanced another step towards conversion, they greatly favoured and protected their Christian subjects. By the command of Odenathus a new college was built in Palmyra, at the public expence, and a church at his own.

The last expedition against Persia, though glorious, and otherwise successful, failed in its principal object—Valerian was brought, laden with chains to the walls of the besieged city, and the Palmyrenians summoned beneath them; a herald then proclaimed, that on the next stone or arrow being sent against Ctesiphon, the head of Valerian should be thrown back in return. Hopeless and despairing, Odenathus and Zenobia drew off their armies, in the faint expectation that treaty and ransom might effect, what it was proved force could not.

In the fate of this captive monarch, remarked Odenathus, there is something more than we can comprehend—thrice hath he been on the eve of deliverance, when disappointed by circumstances, in appearance trifling.—The hand of heaven itself, though why we know not, seems against him.

Their return to Palmyra was a day of triumph.—Open the public prisons, exclaimed Zenobia.—A useless command, rejoined the exulting Orodes, for they are empty. — Remit the public debts, said Odenathus—nor creditor nor debtor were found—raise pillars and triumphal arches—anticipation had not been idle—distribute corn and wine without cost to the people—here is money, replied the spirited Palmyrenian.—Then to business, returned Odenathus sorrowfully, and the captive Persians were brought forth—some were sold, others doomed to labour at the salt mines until ransomed, and one was condemned to death—his crime, having in battle singled out Odenathus

personally, and after receiving his life from the king more than once, treacherously wounded him.

Ere I die, said the Persian, suffer an aged man to recount his actions: My name is Orosanga—at seven years of age I was taught to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak truth.—In the late war, I three times, without bridle or stirrup, kept my seat whilst cutting through a wall of enemies—I spoke to my arrows, saying, Away to the breast of Odenathus: they could not have missed their aim, had not the Queen Zenobia received them on her shield.—And I, now before you Palmyrenians, confess these things.—At fifteen this girdle of divine protection was put upon me—the gold is still pure, and the embroidered characters still fresh;—when I received it from the hand of one of the magi, he told me I should die in Persia.

He told thee false, interrupted Hyrcanius, the priest of Apollo—and he beckoned to the executioners to seize their

victim and do their duty.—Orosanga, with clenched hands, pressed the girdle to his eyes, and upon their attempting to deprive him of it, grasped it firmly.—Recovering himself, he added with manly dignity—Hear me yet recount my deeds to the last—since that period, Palmyrenians, I have killed five hundred wild beasts of various kinds, and planted above a thousand bearing trees : olive, mulberry, and date.—Being informed that a certain field was good soil were it watered, I did not approach the sacred fire, until I had dug beds and enticed rivulets through it, from the great river Tigris—that very field, the next year produced an abundant harvest of maize and rice planted by my hand—thus an enemy to Palmyra, may yet be a friend to man :—For these actions I dined at the king's table, and received the cup of honour from the hand of the chief satrap—yet here I suffer death, although it was told me that I should die in Persia.

As the priests were seizing him, and an

executioner lifted the knife to his throat—Odenathus advanced: taking the hand of Orosanga, go my friend, he said, go and die in Persia.

And hath no disturbances occurred in our absence? enquired the king; no murmurings, no disaffection?—Yes, replied Orodes, some of a public, others of a private nature. Inform me of the first, said Odenathus.—A man is now in confinement at my house, accused of being the false accuser of another: A scribe, who having been sent by his employer to Arethusa, returned hither, with an alarming account of the state of the government at that place.—If his testimony be true, nothing there, under Valerius, thy new governor has prospered—the morals of the people are neglected at the same time that their pleasures are restricted—he asserts, that the public buildings are going to ruin, that the soil is uncultivated

and commerce disregarded, that imposts are increased, husbandry not encouraged, and all the inhabitants wearied and discontented. Harmadrian, the reporter, is a youth of talents, wherefore his testimony was eagerly credited by many natives of Arethusa, and here generally believed, though, as we have since proved, wholly void of foundation.—Let me advise severity and instant punishment, or minds such as his may pervert many, and the consequences be dangerous.

Odenathus made no reply, he repaired to his secret chamber, from whence an officer, shortly after, brought Orodes a command to see the following order put the same hour into execution.—Valerius to be recalled from his government, which is given to Harmadrian.—See thou that Valerius return without delay to Palmyra, and Harmadrian be properly invested governor of Arethusa.

All wonder and indignation, Orodes for some time hesitated, whether to comply, or seek the king and expostulate—

he shewed the order to many ; it was read attentively by all, but not a single observation was made. The wondering Har-madrian full of pride and dignity departed, and Valerius returned.—On his arrival in Palmyra, he threw himself from his horse, and rushed to the palace of Odenathus ; but happily, ere he had time to reach the apartments and burst with his complaints into the royal presence, he was met in the court by Elkanah who awaited him.—Elkanah, that ‘ unerring judge of the human heart, who ever regardless of speech, traced motive to its source’——

Their conference over, Valerius smiled, and silently went to his own house.

And of what nature is the seditious offence? enquired Odenathus of Caleb—Treason, my lord, against thy sacred person, Caleb replied—An artificer in brass, a mutinous fellow living in the suburbs,

who perchance never saw thy person, was heard to threaten that he would take the crown from thy head. The other offence, though it concern not thee personally, has also caused great disquietude to the city. Two traders who, upon a slight dispute concerning a bale of goods, have become deadly enemies; their characters otherwise are fair and estimable, and it is thought by all who were present, that the error was not wilfully committed—they threaten to go to the extremity of the globe to avoid each other, yet both being the fathers of families, and their calling the same, they are not only forced to remain here, but daily to meet at the store-houses or in the gates.—I verily believe were either wounded, the one would drink the other's blood.—Believe it not, said Odenathus; and the fifth offender?

The fifth, my lord, is a sinner against heaven: by trade a wood-cutter, and reckoned among his class a man of merriment and humour.—His crime is blasphemy; he denies the existence of a Pro-

vidence, and asserts——Hold ! interrupted Odenathus ; sully not thy lips by repeating the arguments of impiety ; I will hear them from himself. The last is the great offender. Conduct me to his dwelling.—But, my lord, replied Caleb, it is a miserable hut in the worst part of the city.—I asked thee not what or where his abode—I desired thee to conduct me thither.

Caleb went forward, and Odenathus, who had once more exchanged the breastplate of war for the garment of peace, followed. When thus traversing the streets, it was ever known to be his wish to pass unnoticed, and what so sacred to the Palmyrenians as the wish of Odenathus ? Whilst fast proceeding, Caleb suddenly stopped, and turning back, in a low voice, said, Dost behold, my lord, that group of men in aprons and bonnets ? The third from the gateway is the noble artificer in brass, who threatens to deprive thee of thy crown.—Walk on, said Odenathus, and they reached the

gate. The men knowing his person, yet aware that he was in private, stepped hastily back to let him pass with respect and silence, each eagerly whispering the other to leave room. At that moment, the latchet of Odenathus' sandal snapped asunder, and without inconvenience, he could proceed no further. Calling to Caleb, he pointed downward to the cause of his delay, and placing his foot on a stone, was stooping to refasten the thong, when the third man from the gateway started forward, and kneeling on one knee, took the foot of Odenathus on the other; with well-timed dexterity, he instantly repaired the sandal, then with officious servility examined the other. Odenathus thanked him courteously, and stood a few minutes on the spot, pointing out to Caleb some intended improvements in that quarter, when both overheard the man boasting of his wondrous deed, and saw him run from neighbour to neighbour, pride and vanity in his countenance,

and stiff importance in every motion. Friend, said Odenathus, addressing him in a loud and commanding tone of voice, Let not him whose hand glories in having clasped my sandal, ever again prate of taking the crown from my head.

They walked on until they reached the suburbs. Yonder, my lord, is the habitation of the man of chance.—I will go in alone, replied Odenathus; and whilst I am with him, do thou fetch to this place the traders of whom thou spakest. Caleb found them in the silk-market, and in his way back, thus accompanied, scarcely could prevent them bursting into acts of violence; with smothered rage, each invoked on the head of the other, the vengeance of the king. When Odenathus again appeared, his sudden dejection struck Caleb with surprise: on coming out of the wood-cutter's house, he let fall the latch, and stood leaning pensively against the door, as having forgotten his command to Caleb, when his

attention was roused by the sight of Artamon and Dionysius, the two vindictive merchants.

Ere he could speak to either, they both, the one red, the other pale with anger, began to exculpate themselves. My lord, I was two furlongs from the spot, and could not have done it, exclaimed Dionysius.—I saw it, great king, retorted Artamon; I saw him come over and touch the balance—my head was turned aside, but I saw him do it.—And why not have been more attentive to thy affairs, asked Odenathus, and watched that he did not touch the balance?—I was but settling the beam, said Artamon; and supposing I had touched, nay, swung it, and thrown my coat and vest into the weight scale, it had scarcely paid me for the bale of cotton I sold him.—And who compelled thee to make so wretched a bargain? demanded the king. Would you have me judge that it was made over wine.—My cotton shall be restored. Thy weights and measures should be destroyed.—There

is not, my lord, a more pestilent wretch than this Artamon in all Palmyrene; and were I to see him on his death-bed, I would not put forth a finger if it could restore him health and life; nay, with my own hand, it would be ecstasy to set his blood afloat like a fountain.—And I, replied the other, with dreadful ferocity, could see thee linger out a wretched existence in the dungeons of the city, and thy family given over to want and beggary.

Thus, observed Odenathus, I stand between two intentional assassins, the fear of the law alone preventing murder; and yet I am informed, that setting aside this fatal enmity, you are both worthy citizens, honest, industrious, and loyal.—I am all that, exclaimed Dionysius; but thou wilt soon be deprived of me, my lord; for if that man, Artamon, remain a citizen of this place, I depart.—Depart, said Odenathus.—Now thou wilt believe me, cried the other, exultingly; did I not say what would be the result of an

appeal to the king, who is all probity and justice? O my lord, thou knowest not that man; he is capable of every crime beneath the sun, and were any bodily evil to come on thee or me, he would laugh aloud, and like a barbarian, dance and clap his hands over us. Rather would I, Artamon, sleep for ever in a prison, than that one word of this fellow, this Dionysius, should release me.

Caleb, said Odenathus, be this man, Artamon, instantly put in prison, there to remain until taken out by that man, Dionysius; and be the whole property of Dionysius seized by the procurator, nor restored but at the prayer of Artamon.

Cassimus, the wood-cutter, had been from childhood, an example to all in his class of life of every domestic virtue, until, unhappily, a journey to Tyre on affairs of his calling had brought him into evil society, when, on his return to Palmyra, the new ideas he had there im-

Bibb spread round him baleful poison. Odenathus found him sunk in the basest stupor, abandoned to indolence, and incorrigible with respect to his belief, that as chance had placed him in the world, it was the duty of chance to feed and support him and his family without self-exertion.

Cassinus had been seldom known to sleep out of his quarter, yet had a month elapsed since he had left his house, and none knew whither he was gone; most of the neighbours had seen him go with his bag of provisions into the woods north of the salt-pits, but not one had seen him come back. Great, then, their surprise and joy (for his cheerfulness rendered him pleasing to many) to behold him one evening walking leisurely homeward, stopping at every step, with affected curiosity, to look at the shops and wares exposed for sale in the streets through which he passed; his hands were stuck in his girdle, and when he drew nearer, they remarked that he carried his head

most loftily, and mightily raised his eye-brows.

But nature would not longer suffer affectation to usurp her throne in the human heart. Cassinus no sooner reached his own wretched, beloved home, and saw his wife and children running to meet him, and beheld his glad neighbours crowding from all sides, than the head stooped to meet the caress, the cold eye became moist, and the hand of friendship was extended.

Friends and neighbours, said he, with rustic gaiety, throwing himself at the foot of a tree near his door, bring me neither food, nor drink, as if I were a famished wanderer, but come, all of you, and sit in a ring, and listen to the wonders I shall relate. They obeyed, some eating their evening meal, others chewing fragrant nuts and herbs, and a few women spinning; his wife at his side, and their children at his feet, he thus began :—

Let none here presume again to deny

that I am the favourite son of good fortune. It is a month back since I fell asleep within here, in my own house, beneath my own roof; but not beneath my own roof did I awake: I awoke in the desert, stretched on a bed of sand; and when I opened my eyes, verily, I howled with despair, for whether I was four leagues from Palmyra, or a thousand, I knew not, and I feared to walk, lest I should have to walk the thousand instead of the four. I continued howling until I roused a wolf from his cave, who, stepping from it, most graciously howled me a welcome in return. By wondrous chance, at that instant, a few scattered soldiers on horseback came from behind that cave, and one most kindly stepping before me, sent an arrow through the head of the wolf. Most valiant sir, I cried, which ever way thou art going, wilt thou take me back to Palmyra? Regardless of my prayers, he galloped off with the rest, but in his haste, fortunately dropped his sword; with this I struck sparks, kindled a fire, cut

up my wolf, and having dined upon him, girded it on me to meet future attacks.

Thus I lived nearly ten days, and each day climbed the hills to look for a traveller, but none travelled that way. I one morning sat watching on the edge of a precipice, (for fearing the bite of a snake on my leg, or the encounter of another wild beast, I thought thus to lower myself safely out of their reach, should any appear,) when I fell asleep, and in my sleep, rolled over the precipice; there below I should for ever have tarried, a broken, dead man, food for eagles, had not chance again befriended me.

At the instant I fell, shepherds were passing below, who kindly caught me in their arms, and broke my fall. What shall I give you in return, said I, or what service can I do you?—Cut us down some trees, they replied, and construct us a booth.—How singular, methought, that they should guess my occupation! How could they know I was a wood-cutter? But I readily answered, I will, my friends,

and willingly, and without delay;—give me an axe.—We have no axe, they replied; we have only our staves and knives. Canst thou not cut us down a tree without an axe? or, if not, canst not make thee one?—That I cannot without materials: I must have iron, fire, an anvil—wood, of which to make a handle, and tools wherewith to shape it; supply me with these, and having made an axe, I speedily perform your wishes.—This is an excuse, said they, to evade shewing thyself grateful.


Friends and neighbours, you cannot imagine how this unjust charge of ingratitude cut me to the heart; I stared at their inconsiderateness, and complained of it bitterly. I cannot work without materials, said I, loudly; I can cut down, build, construct, turn, fashion, and do many marvellous works, as all my quarter can witness, but cannot produce something out of nothing. Had I an axe, in a few hours, I would, before your eyes, fell yonder cedar; but, having no axe, can

only wish I had one.—Do not axes grow? asked one among them. Go and gather thee one.—At this I laughed—I laughed at their ignorance and simplicity, (for, brethren, shepherds are very simple persons,) and as I turned from them, and walked on mournfully, I trod upon an axe, dropped, as I suppose, by some labouring man travelling from afar that way, for shepherds use not such tools.

And didst thou cut down the cedar, my father? asked one of the boys.—I did, child, and I constructed a tent, and shaded it with boughs and twisted branches; yet, wouldst thou believe? the shepherds never came again that way—I was therefore constrained to live in it myself. Now one night there was a storm; I vow to you, friends, I lay down to sleep in my own new hut, but, as I imagine, must have risen and walked in my sleep, for the next morning I found myself lying at a distance on a smooth green spot, covered warmly with hay and grass. I looked around, and saw not my

hut; I went to the spot on which it stood the night before, and found it had been stricken by lightning—it was scattered in rude disorder, and more than half consumed. Was not this another most fortunate escape? Hereafter, I would advise all parents to teach their children to walk in their sleep.

And where next, dear husband, didst take up thy abode? enquired his wife—I selected a noble tree, a plantain, with intent to lodge the same night among its branches: I took off my outer vest and woollen turban, designing to roll them into a pillow, when, methought, it were better first to select the most favourable part of the tree for shelter and convenience; leaving therefore my garment below, I began to climb, but had only ascended a few steps, when looking down, I saw a man steal from behind the tree, and before my eyes rob me of my vest and turban; with a loud shout I leaped to the ground, but he had already thrown down his booty and ran off, and I turned



again to the tree : laying hold of a branch with one hand, I put forth the other to grasp the trunk, the better to assist me ; and what met my hand ? a smooth soft slimy substance !—Oh good neighbours, my blood is even now cold, when I think of what I touched, of what I distinguished—the whole trunk of the tree from root to summit was entwined by a serpent ; serpents such as writhe round deer, monkeys, and buffaloes, and having crushed their bones, swallow them alive. —Quicker than him who would have robbed me, I ran, nor ceased running until I fell with weariness ; and then I wept—I wanted water, I wept for bread and water, and my own home,—an hour after, chance sent all.

A grazing mule passed by me, carrying water-skins, at which, requesting him to stop a moment, I freely drank. —Another laden with panniers, followed by his driver, next came in sight, at my desire he threw me a cake of bread, but not at my desire would take me home,

or direct me the way. A camel then trotted in view, no trappings had he on, yet he did not seem a wild camel, he looked haughtily around, and seemed as bewildered and discontented as myself:—Take me, camel, said I, where thou wilt, provided thou takest me out of this, and I mounted: believe me, friends, when I solemnly declare, before you all here assembled, that I used neither charm nor incantation to guide or force his course; yet can any guess where he brought me?—To the gate of Palmyra.—And where think you, did he stop?—At the king's stables.—There stood the surly grooms who dismounted me, and though I offered to explain how we met, they disdained either to question or answer me: thus was I removed from home, I know not how, saved from every peril by the good star that shone at my nativity, and brought home by the royal camel.—And now, neighbours, what think you; can any here boast of more marvellous, yet true adventures, and may I not with justice be

henceforward named—the favourite son of fortune ?

He ceased, but ere any could reply, one voice was heard, and at the sound of that voice, all eyes were turned to whence it came. From among the sitting throng arose one man. Rather boast henceforth, said he, that thou art the son of Providence, for chance no more governs this world, than chance delivered thee in thy late perils.—Cassimus looked up to him who spoke, and prostrated himself in the dust before Odenathus.—Does thy heart comprehend, (or for the benefit of these, among whom thy evil example has done much mischief,) must I further explain ? Know then, that from the hour of conversing with thee in this thy dwelling, (which shall hereafter be made, at my command, more the dwelling of comfort,) from that hour to this, thou hast scarcely been from my sight. By my desire thou wert removed to the desert. I killed the wolf, I armed thy hand with a sword ; I was one of those who caught thee from

the precipice, I caused the axe to be thrown in thy foot-path; by my direction thou wert saved from lightning and the serpent; I sent thee food and water, and the camel which brought thee home was my camel.—Cassimus, think upon these things.—Was any miracle here performed, yet was not all premeditated?—Nothing was done by chance—thou couldst not, thou saidst, gather tools ready made, or produce something from nothing, neither can any other man—I, the master of thousands, no more than thee—If man cannot, must there not be a God, a Providence? There is, Cassimus, there is one who watches over thee, over us, over the world, the universe—then beloved, talk no more of chance.

I tell thee man, said Dionysius, that he may there linger, pine, and die, ere I utter one word in his favour, and though reduced to poverty, I would rather perish

piece-meal than be indebted to him for one drop of water; he charged me with dishonesty, and I had rather he had taken my life; nay, barely suspicion that I could deal unfairly, justifies my eternal hatred: and why thus importune me in his behalf? Hath he not been heard to declare he will expire in his prison, sooner than owe his liberty to me, and is not this the sentence of the king: moreover, as I hear he lives therein most contentedly. To be taken from our house and family and mercantile affairs, I grant is hardship; yet others have endured these things; nay, been known to endure them with fortitude—a prison is not an agreeable abode, but better men than Artamon have, ere this lived and died in prison.

Thou art a better man than Artamon, said one of his hearers.—I am, I know it, he replied with conscious dignity, and thus unconsciously passed sentence on himself. The same night, this better man in his own eyes, was also laid in a prison.

Three weeks had the walls alone

echoed his complaints, a human being he never saw, nor heard the sound of a human voice; his food and change of raiment were conveyed through an aperture in the wall, and all was the silence of the grave—in the dead of night Dionysius slept profoundly, yet a gentle sigh awoke him, and to him, who had thus long been immured without light or employment, it seemed the sigh of heaven. In vain he questioned the conveyer of food; no answer was returned; but sighs and stifled groans proceeding from the neighbouring ward were still heard. A fellow prisoner! said Dionysius, could we but meet, society would alleviate the horror of our existence.

He long meditated, and then proceeded to action. Soon, by dexterous force, he loosened a stone in the partition wall, which having removed, and taken away others, he had a full view of an extensive apartment: a high and solitary lamp shed pale light below, and fell upon the form of a man stretched on a bed, his hair

and beard long and neglected, his face pale and sickly. Dionysius approached with caution; the man was sleeping; he appeared to have been lately wounded, and in the breast; on a table near, lay various surgical instruments, medicines, bandages, and materials for dressing wounds; whilst examining these, the sick man awoke, and in a faint voice, asked for drink:—His attendant hath left him, said Dionysius to himself, and taking the already filled cup, drew aside the curtain, and supporting his drooping head with one arm, held the draught to his lips.—Thank thee, Kedar, said he, and now would I have my wound again dressed, for it is stiff and painful, and that done, arrange my pillow, I pray thee, and smooth my bed—thy hand trembles—it is not as usual, bold and skilful—call again the surgeon.

Be not uneasy, said Dionysius, compassionately, thy attendant hath left thee and no surgeon can be summoned by me, for I also am a prisoner; accept my offices

until his return, and even then I will not leave thee, but faithfully and diligently administer to thy wants.—His words were unheard, for the sick man through pain and weakness had fainted. Dionysius used all means for his recovery but in vain, and reflected, how he could reach down the lamp the better to assist his endeavour, for all was nearly dark below—he still supported the sufferer in his arms, and was chafing his temples when the door opened and the keeper appeared, bearing a lamp; he was followed by the king's surgeon and others, who stopped on beholding so unexpected a sight, and looked silently one upon the other.

Come to his assistance, said Dionysius, for mine is unavailing, and he resigned him to proper care; whilst still insensible the wound was dressed, during which Dionysius asked the keeper, who and what was the prisoner—A Palmyrenian, replied the other, who, not brooking longer confinement, sought to release

himself by falling on a sword, which he snatched for the purpose from my side.— And why not, asked Dionysius, remove him hence? light air and suitable comforts could not fail to restore him to health. He is a prisoner for life, replied the man; his name and condition a secret of the state.—For life, exclaimed Dionysius, and yet to be thus neglected!—never, in this cruel situation, ought he to be for a moment abandoned, and yet I found him asleep and deserted; his cry for drink had never been noticed till now, had I not providentially broken through that wall, and come to his help.

Being confined for life, said the surgeon, renders his case truly pitiable, for servants and keepers get weary of perpetual attendance, and we have not yet found one strictly faithful to his office—all refuse to remain immured with disease and darkness.—There is no merit, Sir, in my offer, said Dionysius, being myself a prisoner here, until the will of the king shall release me, but whilst I stay, de-

pend on my services: leave me thy instructions, and, in thy absence, I will faithfully follow them.—As thou well remarkest, returned the surgeon, thy offer hath in truth no great merit: for condemned as thou art to perpetual solitude, a charge like this will be a relief to thy mind; but if thou dost undertake it, first promise to abide by my directions—here stands a water hour-glass, at every turn of this, give him one of these medicines which thou must divide into three equal parts; thou sawst me dress his wound, do thou dress it every tenth hour; drink and food, and all things necessary shall be abundantly supplied: these are my commands, now hear my restrictions—his wound being near the lungs, is of that nature, that exertion must be wholly avoided—thou must not speak to him or suffer him to speak to thee, if he attempt it, be resolute and impose silence—farewell, hereafter thou wilt see me again; till then I commit him to thy care. And nor son, nor brother, could be watched with more

anxious and affectionate care than was the wounded man by Dionysius, he brought in his own bed from the neighbouring ward, and arranged it on the floor by his side: and not for a few hours only, but some days was he a constant faithful attendant on the couch of sickness.

At length the surgeon and his people appeared, accompanied by one who had not hitherto entered the prison, and all drew near the bed in silence.—Can it be done with safety? asked the latter, whom Dionysius perceived by the torches carried behind, but which were veiled from the sight of the sick man, was Odenathus.—I hope, replied the surgeon, that I hazard nothing by pronouncing it may—And after some examination added, yet still doubtingly—it can now be of no evil consequence.

Ere Odenathus could reply, Dionysius fell at his feet—I do not, my lord, he said, ask my own liberty, but that of this unfortunate prisoner, at least if denied

freedom, compassionate his sufferings, and grant him to be removed to a lighter and better apartment, where he may enjoy all, excepting freedom; but were I Odenathus, I would be merciful, and whatever be his crime, in pity, restore him to his home and family.

Keeper, said Odenathus, restore that prisoner, now nearly recovered, to liberty, to his home, and to his family, but for this, pointing to Dionysius, who hath thus wantonly committed trespass, and broken down the wall of the royal prison, detain him here another year in rigorous confinement.—Then here I remain yet another year in confinement, said the wounded Palmyrenian, for never will I see the light of heaven, while this man is debarred from it.—Why, what is that man to thee? asked Odenathus sternly.—What is he to me! every thing—dearer than family, friends, wealth, or freedom; every office, however humble and servile, that the hand of charity could perform, hath he performed for me; he hath

watched night and day by my side ; flung sleep from his eyelids ; hardly tasted food, to administer to my wants ; comforted and cheered me, not by words, but actions ; hourly held the cup of relief to my lips ; dressed my wound, and fulfilled every wish, though only given in signs ; to him I owe my restoration to health and life, of which my impious and cowardly hand would have deprived me ; and here, O king, I swear to perish, if we leave not this prison together.

Odenathus turned away, and leaned on the shoulder of the surgeon, then, as recovering himself, replied, his voice faltering, But liberty to this man would not be of the same advantage as to thee ; he is one utterly despoiled of every worldly possession ; and as he himself can best bear witness, the apparel he now wears is all his riches ; his whole wealth is by me confiscated to the state. —Oh then, my lord, if the restoration of that wealth depend on thee, let his humanity to a wounded stranger plead in

his favour, and incline thee to pity him, but if not, blessed and praised be heaven that I am rich ! the next hour shall not pass, ere all my wealth be divided with this my friend and preserver.

I can bear no more, said Odenathus faintly, and turning to the surgeon, he desired him to act as his wisdom should dictate. Is there danger in the discovery? if there is, prevent, delay it.—There is, replied the surgeon, and it must be delayed.—Delayed ! it cannot—prevented ! the discovery is already made.—Dionysius snatches a torch from an attendant, and holds it to the face of his fellow prisoner—their eyes for the first time meet, the torch falls to the ground, and Dionysius drops into the arms of Artamon.

The wound bleeds afresh, but the hand of skill is near, and danger averted —Artamon, said Odenathus, in a low voice, thou art free, for Dionysius, on his knees, hath begged thy freedom ; Dionysius, thy wealth is restored to thee, for

such is the prayer of Artamon. O were the object that gave rise to your dispute and hatred, now placed before your eyes ! Ye entered these walls the bitterest of enemies—go forth, examples to the end of your lives of virtuous friendship.

Rejoice, my kinsman ! exclaimed the youthful Herodian, addressing Meonius, rejoice ! for on this day hath my father given me all the Persian spoils ; elephants, camels, horses, litters, garments of gold and tissue, carpets, tripods, ivory beds, slaves, captives—all ; he has reserved but one small coronet of pearl, which he designs for the Queen Zenobia. Come and behold every room, and court, and garden of my palace, filled with eastern riches : thou dost not rejoice, Meonius, as I would have thee ; a smile hangs on thy lip, but none appears in thine eye.

And canst thou, Herodian, think that

such intelligence will give joy to Meonius? the subtle, yet fierce Meonius, whose life is a destructive whirlwind which steals unawares upon sunshine, and as speedily vanishes, leaving behind it sorrow and destruction—Meonius, who reads in every look a reproach, in every word disguised insult—Kindness ever to him appears sordid intention, and manly spirit presuming arrogance.

His uncle Odenathus, though but five years older than himself, he had ever dreaded, yet had ever admired; Herodian, long since co-partner in the empire and sharer in the purple, he envied, and Zenobia and her children he utterly abhorred. The whole life of Herodian, on the contrary, was perpetual sunshine: tenderly attached to his loving father, sincerely fond of the queen, and doting on her babes, he laughed away every care, and appeared to think existence but a pastime; mirth and pleasure attended every step—uneasy only when business obtruded itself, he became the tool of

those around him, and ever regardless of justice, defended Meonius. Sheltering himself under the name and power of Herodian, Meonius daily committed acts which deserved the severest punishment, and which, if discovered, were ever punished by Odenathus with the utmost severity. The speech of Meonius was a labyrinth, that of Herodian an open vista; the whole study of the latter was to excuse his kinsman's errors, defend his person, and supply his expences with all the profuse vanity of a youth delighting in the officious power of serving an elder, whilst the favourite wish of Meonius appeared to be in disappointing every cherished desire of Herodian.

When they arrived at the palace, All thou seest, said the prince, is mine, and now take one more look; half of all here I give thee, and the other half I design to dispose of in order to redeem six score Jews from the mines of Egypt, the forefathers of whom were sent thither two centuries back by the Romans. Elkanah

hath kindly promised to do this service for me. Take therefore whatever strikes thy fancy, and these treasures disappear.—And dost thou not retain any part for thyself? asked Meonius, surprised.—Yes, replied the youth; I retain a heart of curious workmanship; and then, to the astonishment of Meonius, burst into loud and ungovernable laughter.

Pardon me, my kinsman, said he—I pray thee, pardon me, but at that instant thou didst so greatly resemble a camelion, thy head immoveable, and thy eyes turning every way round the room—But say, what wilt thou have? Shall all here be thine?—Of what service to a soldier these luxuries? exclaimed the gloomy and sullen Meonius. If thou art sincere in thy offer, give me the horse I stopped to look at in the court below.

Herodian, turning to his servants, desired that the horse might be immediately delivered, with all its trappings, to the grooms of his kinsman.—No, exclaimed Meonius; strip him of those

glittering incumbrances, and lead him by the mane.—And what wilt thou next have? asked Herodian.—The heart thou spakest of.—Nay, nay, my friend; that and the pearl coronet are excepted: the latter belongs to the queen, and the heart is too precious a gem to part with.—I see here, replied Meonius, gems of every colour and device, yet none of that shape.—It cannot be seen, because enclosed in an ivory case; moreover, thou shalt never see it.—Never! exclaimed Meonius, his eyes darting fury; I will leave nothing here unexamined, and until I find, I'll seek.

Hold! cried Herodian, gaily, nor thus break my porcelain, and scatter on the floor my jewels. Canst thou not comprehend that the heart I retain beats with life—throbs, burns, and flutters, as imagination bids?—A Persian captive, replied Meonius, sarcastically; truly, I hear thou hast good store of such, given to thee by thy *virtuous* father: and he turned away with contempt.

Herodian seemed ever blind to the greatest insult offered to himself, as if fearful to injure the soft beauty of his countenance by taking notice of it, but the slightest offence to his father impressed the frown of indignation on his youthful brow, and with cool dignity, he replied, 'Yes, thou sayest true ; my virtuous father did give me up the slaves and concubines of the Persian king, as he well knew, that through my means, and mine alone, they would be all safely and honourably sent back to Persia. Not one remains. The woman I speak of is not a Persian, but a Syrian, taken by Sapor at the last sacking of Emessa, and rescued by me ere she could be even conveyed by her captor to Ctesiphon.

Again Meonius gave his scoffing laugh, and would have retreated, as fearing his chaste ear might suffer from a tale of dalliance, when Herodian, with returning cheerfulness, caught his arm. I have tempted thee sufficiently—canst thou not guess who is this captive? And

yet, Meonius, I ever suspected thee my rival.

Meonius started—Victoria! he cried; and his limbs became convulsed, and his features agitated. And wherefore did he tremble? why was he thus overwhelmed? Oh, had the helmet of the soldier who seized Victoria at the battle of Emessa, fallen off, at that instant fallen—no Persian would he have proved, no seizure lawfully permitted by war would Victoria have been seen, but the victim of disappointed love. Meonius had been rejected by Victoria for Herodian, and to revenge himself by parting them for ever, he had taken advantage of the confusion of a field of battle, to give her to the Persian spoilers.

Hath she enquired for me? at length he asked.—Often, replied a voice, and looking up, he beheld Victoria advancing—my only dread of returning to Palmyra being the fear of meeting thee.—Was then captivity more welcome than my presence?—It was: to be separated from

those we love, and she looked at Herodian, is misery, but to be hourly persecuted by him to whom we can make no return, is the worst of miseries.

Herodian endeavoured to join their hands in friendship, but Victoria shrank away, and Meonius rushed furiously from the apartment.

Empire, popularity, the object of his love—he has them all! a youth vain, effeminate, trifling; and I, my sword my only inheritance! But what an inheritance has not the sword procured! Fame, riches, power, all—all, excepting love; and that, nor the honours nor the wealth of the world can purchase,—all, all are his!

Oh, dreadful to dive into the heart of Meonius—horrible to seek to know his thoughts, hopes, intentions! With rapid strides he traverses the rampart, descends into the streets, crosses the court of the lesser temple, and unconscious that every step was watched, enters his own mansion—four men follow him. Strive not

to learn what passes in the mansion of Meonius; it is night, and every door, and window, and aperture is carefully secured.

No, said Meonius, as he rose the next morning from his couch, I will not, cannot do it. How awful is night! and how dreadful the thoughts that night inspire! I will not do it; gentler methods shall first be tried.—Gentler! were then my intentions gentle? Oh, Herodian! hadst thou bestowed on me but half the love thou bearest thy father! My uncle! had I received but one of the many favours heaped upon thy son—Victoria too!—Crown, fame, and love for ever, ever lost!

Few of the citizens were risen, the streets were still empty, the night-centinels and watchmen had not yet retired to rest, when the four men quitted the dwelling of Meonius, and went to the guard-house in the square tower, at the west corner of the city. Meonius, on their departure, ascended to the roof of

his house, and there reposed to recal his wandering senses, to cool his frenzied brain, when footsteps approaching, filled him with alarm ; the sight of an ascending spectre from the grave could not have given more chilling horror to his frame.

What means this agitation, nephew ? enquired Odenathus. But instead of pretending to be ignorant of the cause, I am come to offer relief.—I wish thee well, my lord, said Meonius.—I never doubted it, replied Odenathus, smiling, well knowing that these words ever preceded some new accusation of Herodian.—He hath given away all the spoils thou gavest him.—I know that also, but he first offered to share them with thee ; and conscious that he would, I gave him all, thereby wishing to encrease your mutual friendship.—Had that been truly thy wish, my lord, said Meonius, thou shouldst have made me the giver, not the receiver.

Odenathus acknowledged that there

was some truth in this remark, and then enquired how his heart felt respecting Victoria. The youthful fancy of Herodian hath ever been fixed on her, but with my consent, she never shall be his: her mind is masculine, her tastes and occupations (allowing the difference of sex) are wholly contrary to his, in stature exceeding him as in years, her deportment haughty, her look most arrogant—how can my son be thus infatuated? I, Meonius, design to prevent their union, for if argument and reason fail, force shall do it, and hereafter Herodian will bless my interposition.

Meonius seized the hand of his uncle, and pressed it to his forehead. Renew thy suit, continued Odenathus, and I will forward it. She is as much thy younger as she is Herodian's elder, and when thou shalt have conquered the violence of thy own nature, thou mayst be able to reform her into softer manners; in private life her ambitious spirit will have no opportunity to exercise itself, but my son

she would wholly govern, and in governing him, rule Palmyra : for the sake then of all, their union must be prevented.

Oh, thought Meonius, that they were not gone !—that they were returned ! Would that they might never return !—It is too late, Meonius ; the deed is done. Last night thy hand planned murder ; last night thy hand gave the price of blood, and gold, and golden hopes, distributed by thy means to wretches—a few only—more are not to be found in Palmyrene have secured thy every wish.

Say, dear nephew, continued Odenathus, have I not divined the cause of thy late sorrow and discontent ? And will not a union with the young and rich, the virtuous and truly beautiful Victoria, be pleasing to thee ? Come then, and ere Herodian go to the bath, we will surprise him, and reclaim his captive.

Odenathus rose and descended, followed by Meonius ; he went to the palace of the youthful king, his son and colleague, and without being announced, en-

tered his private apartments. There, seated on a Persian carpet, surrounded by beauteous slaves, Odenathus beheld Herodian and Victoria. They rose, and fell at his feet.

Victoria is my wife! said the youth.—Herodian is mine for ever! exclaimed Victoria. Odenathus could make no reply, on which his son, rising, threw himself into his arms.—Is this true?—Most true, my father: I applied for assistance to Caleb, and he was compelled to obey me.—Meonius, thou hearest, said the king, turning to him: am I forsworn? Said I not they never should be united with my consent?—But separation, said Meonius, is still in thy power, nay, the infliction of deserved punishment.—Hold! interrupted Odenathus, thou forgettest that Herodian is not my subject, but the partner of my throne; as a son therefore only has he transgressed: and, Meonius, when thou shalt become a parent, thou wilt find, that of all policies, that best to follow is the policy of the heart. Then,

turning to Herodian, It is easier to obey than govern, wherefore I would not bequeath thee my power, but divided it with thee, the better to teach thee to rule: command and submission have until now given place to confidence and friendship, but taken in an unguarded hour, thou hast dealt unkindly by me, Herodian.

The youth, speechless with emotion, could only clasp his father yet closer to his breast, and Odenathus at length returned the pressure. Oh, ever thus! beloved, ever may reproof, instead of driving thee from it, bring thee nearer to my bosom! Meonius could not bear this sight, and hastily retired. The king then addressing Victoria— With my will this marriage had never taken place, but since it is past recal, be kind, I implore thee, to the heart thou hast this day secured. I am now privileged to admonish thee in the two-fold capacity of king and father, and turn not deaf to the voice which saith, Check the martial look and spirit that

distinguishes thy character, and henceforward cultivate the softer arts of feminine life. Be convinced that fortitude and masculine courage widely differ; submit to be protected by man whilst he is able to afford protection, nor ever raise thy arm in defence, unless to save one more defenceless, for in woman the extremest necessity alone can justify personal valour.

The barbarian she slew in the late war, my father, would otherwise have torn her from me.—I know it, said Odenathus—I saw the act; it was heroic, perhaps justifiable, but the hand of that woman which had shed blood, should never have been joined to mine: one moment more, and relief was near; I flew to the rescue of an imprisoned virgin, but suddenly stopped on seeing how well that virgin could rescue herself.

Beloved father, said Herodian, Oh! pardon me, but the example of our queen —— Speak on, my son — what wouldst thou say? that she accompanied

me in the late wars? She did, though against my will. 'The Persian concubines,' said Zenobia, 'attend their king, and shall not a wife?' Yet never saw I a bow, a sword, a spear, or other weapon, in the hand of Zenobia; she often saved my life in battle, but her defence was beauty, for when placed before my bleeding breast, who could strike at it again thus shielded? 'I attend thee to the wars,' she said, 'as physician, nurse, servant, to bind thy wounds, to watch thy food, to guard thy sleep.' She never left my side. Thou well knowest the love our subjects bear us, but in the hour of battle that love was strengthened by patriotism. Aware that the fate of their country depended on Zenobia and her posterity, they formed an impenetrable wall around us, and until I freed myself by force, scarcely had I liberty to raise my arm.

But on our return to Palmyra, my father, thou sawest the consequences of the queen's supposed heroism.—I did, and with grief—Zenobia was equally afflicted.

The Amazonian contagion had spread through every rank in female life, and is not yet wholly suppressed; the firm step, nay, march, the intrepid look, the loud voice, the military attire are still to be seen; and in proportion that the women seemed to have changed their nature, the men had grown nerveless and effeminate. 'Strange,' said I to Zenobia, when alone, 'that what I admire in thee displeases me in every other woman.'—'Because,' she replied, 'thou art as yet blinded by partiality; that gone, and thou wilt be in a tenfold measure displeased with me. For my own sake and that of our subjects, it is time to reform.'—And, Victoria, couldst thou have seen the change which in a few days Zenobia wrought—she hath since become a mother, and is no more the heroine; she no longer accompanies me either in the chase or warlike expeditions, that life hazarded for me being now tenderly devoted to our children.

He was silent, and long waited the

speech of Victoria: but on Victoria all the paternal mildness of Odenathus was lost; she had yet to learn that only those interested in her future welfare would offer admonition, and now most ungraciously received that of the king. He read her thoughts, and aware that time and example could alone effect a change, he embraced her, saying, Come, my child, and let me present thee to Zenobia.

Leading the way to the private gallery which connected their palaces, he entered the queen's apartments, and went silently forward. The glare of the sun was softened by curtains, and by this mild twilight they beheld, at the further end of the spacious room, Septimia, on whose lap reposed a sleeping child, another lay at her side, and at her feet, on a low couch, sat Zenobia suckling her last-born son.

Odenathus looked at Victoria, and in her countenance read—Is this the Zenobia I remember ere I quitted Palmyra for Emessa, who, half clad in armour,

mounted on an Arabian steed, daily followed her husband to the chase of the wild beast? Gently drawing Victoria away, Odenathus led her to an antichamber, saying, At noon I will lead thee to her, and acknowledge thee as my daughter, when thou wilt be received by her as sister-sovereign; but at this hour I alone have liberty to enter here: thus hath she long fulfilled every maternal duty more faithfully than can the humblest mother in Palmyra. Thou wilt strive to equal her, my child, wilt thou not for thy own sake—for mine, for the sake of my beloved Herodian, and that of thy future subjects?

Victoria was overcome. Equal her, she said, I cannot, but I will strive to imitate—no sister-sovereign, but her servant ever—not so much thy daughter as one of thy adoring people.

I like it not, repeated Zabdas, and thou hast done well to inform me. They have gold, and refuse to say by what means obtained—by whom given! Go, Terentius, and bring them hither.—Twelve soldiers were a few minutes after brought before Zabdas; but promises and threats were alike unavailing. They broke into open mutiny, and persisted in declaring that the gold found concealed in their garments was part of the spoils taken on the field of battle. Zabdas could not prove to the contrary, and conscious that no one could be confined, much less imprisoned or punished before conviction, having made the soldiers give up the gold with a promise that it should be restored if the king thus commanded, he suffered them to depart, and then hastened to the palace.

We know not, my lord, continued Zabdas, how far treason may have spread, and though only twelve have as yet been discovered, many cohorts and legions, nay, the whole army itself, bribed by a

foreign enemy, may in heart be regicides. There is the gold, thy own image made the reward of treachery!

Odenathus, without hesitation, desired Zabdas to place those twelve men on guard at the gate of Vespasian, and conceal what he knew from every human being. Zabdas, accustomed to obey the king regardless of his motives, complied, and satisfied that he had done his duty, devoted himself for the remainder of the day, to relaxation and domestic arrangements.

That night—the post at which these twelve men were placed, was one of the most important in the city, being undefended by the natural barriers of mountains. They were seated round the hearth, on which blazed a cheerful fire, when a gentle knock at the door of the guard-room caused general alarm and terror—(ere they turned traitors, thunders could not have appalled them.) On opening the door, a man entered—it was Odenathus.

Ye are amazed, my friends, but be not offended. I did not doubt your vigilance, or seek to surprise any sleeping on his post, for when I placed you here, I well knew to whom I confided it, aware that strength, courage, and fidelity were indispensable qualities, and from twenty legions, was it possible to select men of more approved valour or patriotism? moreover, we are all personally acquainted; not one here but has taken in turn to guard my tent in time of war, my house in time in peace, and many of you have received on your shields the weapons designed for me. Think not, therefore, I come to watch that ye perform well your duty; I come not to watch, but to sleep.

He advanced, and drawing forward a seat, placed himself among them at the fire. Since sun-set, continued he, stirring the embers, and chafing his hands—since sun-set, I have been upon these south ramparts, devising new alterations; it is too late now to return to the palace, and

if pleasing to you, my fellow soldiers, must take up my abode here, in your guard-room, until morning. No alarm will arise on my account at the palace, for they, as you, well know this is my frequent custom, to sleep where night surprises me; from the kindness of the host in every house of Palmyra, I find a home. Come, my friends, add faggots and the cones of the fir-tree to your fire, and make it blaze more cheerfully, for I feel cold and chilled; and bring me food—no soldier of mine, I trust, but hath meat, and bread, and wine at command, and something over for an intruding guest like me; bring me of all, and I rest here until morning.

Oh, Odenathus, what a soul was thine! were such permitted to live for ever in the flesh, how soon would this our earth become a heaven! The traitors looked upon each other; one, retired into darkness, with clenched hand smote his breast, another dashed from his cheek the scalding tear, a few went to the window which

overlooked a deep moat, and threw down therein that they had violently torn from their garments, whilst others ran to and fro in eager confusion, bringing in wood and provisions ; they then stripped off their upper raiment, and collecting their cloaks, laid them in a heap, and formed a bed for Odenathus.

He, without looking, saw all—without speaking, felt all ; engaged in unbuckling his sword, and unclasping his mantle, he took no further notice of any present, until seeing his bed prepared, he stretched himself thereon before the fire.

Thanks, fellow soldiers ; this is softer than the plains of Thrace, where you and I have slept on beds of snow, and fields of burning sand.—Here, my lord, said they, is wine, and barley cakes, and the cold flesh of a buck.—Venison ! dainty fare for a soldier ! not usual, I trust, for timid is the man whose constant food is deer.—These, my lord, replied they, are the remains of one of the many thou sentest thy troops but yesterday, to

celebrate the birth of thy second son.— You have not brought me salt, added he, gaily; bring me salt, or I shall mistake you for enemies. And now be seated, every man, around me; you have all supped, it is true, but soldiers should be ever equally prepared to feast and fight; you have all fought by my side—now pledge me in wine. Nay, heap not thus the fire, or we shall endanger the city, and to-morrow be punished by the magistrates.

He fed and drank, but their attempt to feed or pledge him was vain; not a cheek but burned with emotion—few eyes but were dimmed by the tear of remorse, of love, and admiration. They could not be deceived; they saw he knew what passed in their hearts, and thus convinced, thus situated, how great the mental suffering of each!—Permit me now, he said, to rest; but be mindful that you awake me at sun-rise: let no one slumber, lest I be awakened by a satrap—then would our general, Zabdas,

surely behead me for sleeping on my post.

Although his cheerfulness was feigned, his weariness was not, for he had risen at break of day, and until now, had not been under shelter; various exertions in the open air had brought on heaviness and oppression, and scarcely had he reclined on the bed, when his eyes closed, and he fell into a profound sleep.

All night he slept, and all night they watched; towards morn, raising their eyes to heaven, and invoking the gods to bear witness of their oath, they joined hands over his sleeping head, and with awful, yet impassioned solemnity, swore to die in torments rather than lift a hand against him.

The night passed away, dawn appeared, the sun arose, and Odenathus was awakened. He raised himself on one elbow, and looked stedfastly at the soldiers: *Am I indeed alive?* he said. These words, that look, pierced every bosom, and in silence, all fell prostrate

to the earth. He rose, and reached down his sword and mantle, and taking from the latter a silken purse, opened it, and showered gold upon the floor. Thus, said he, in a low and solemn voice, the price of blood is on your heads—on the heads of intended regicides: henceforth not *soldiers*, but *citizens*. Return to the several trades you followed ere you embraced that of arms; be faithful, industrious, and loyal to your king and your nation for the three ensuing years, and thus win back that sword now by treason most justly forfeited.

The evening of the next day, Meonius was no longer to be found in Palmyra; accompanied by six of his household, he fled none knew whither. His flight discovered all to Odenathus, and the criminal intentions of the soldiers faded to innocence when compared to those of his nephew. Resolved to abide the consequences as to his personal safety, no accusation was brought against the soldiers.

Odenathus falsely indulgent, placed the design of Meonius to the sudden frenzy of disappointed love, and his design and name were speedily forgotten.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

ZENOBIA, QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

Archery in the plains of Palmyra—Harmadrian, the new governor of Arethusa, arrives from thence—Meonius pardoned by his uncle—The Chase of the Elephant—The Hall of Audience—Odenathus and his son quit Palmyra, and go to Larissa—The Desert—The Traveller—The death of Meonius—The murdered bodies of Odenathus and Herodian found in the woods—They are brought back to Palmyra—Zenobia's despair.

THE youthful Herodian and the lovely Victoria, are unconscious that a year hath gone by since they plighted mutual fidelity ; Herodian, the gay, the careless, ever ready to please and be pleased, hath become the slave of his wife, and

hourly studying to indulge her wishes, he is not sensible, that he hazards thereby the respect of his people—for the wishes of Victoria are often governed by caprice and extravagance, and notwithstanding the advice and authority of Odenathus, the ruling passion of her nature daily gathers strength.

The anniversary of their union was appointed to be held a day of rejoicing through the empire, and at Palmyra various festivals were ordained in commemoration thereof, but though Herodian appeared to take pleasure in the preparations for all, Victoria slighted all for one. The spacious valley, where the mountains separating, disclose the city to view, is the spot proposed, and under the direction of Victorinus and Caleb, every festive arrangement hath been made. Sun-rise was the signal for opening the city gates, and sun-rise was also the signal for the shepherds and herdsmen to lead their charge to distant pastures:—the gates open, and the shepherds forget their

flocks in eager attention to what passes below:—they stop on the brow of the hill and watch the valley—a body of horse appear, accompanied by music and glittering flags; crowds of joyful citizens follow, and then a troop of amazons are seen: their helmets are of polished silver, their military vests sparkle with gems, and all are uniformly armed with a bow and quiver filled with arrows.

The shepherds are amazed to see so great a concourse of youth and beauty, and descend the better to witness a new and pleasing sight: the band of amazons headed by Victoria file to the right, that of youths commanded by Herodian, pass to the left, and the opening of the hills is filled with militia under Victorinus, in admirable array, whilst the sides are covered even to their summit with joyful citizens, unarmed soldiers, shepherds, flocks, herds, banners, trophies and music;—the city gates being left open, the streets seen through them appear wholly deserted.

Warlike sports begin, wherein skill, dexterity, and grace, are excellently blended; various military evolutions follow; that of the labyrinth succeeds, and when the sun-beam touches the pinnacle of the Temple of Apollo, a pole is erected in the centre of the valley, to which is fastened a target; again the youths and amazons retreat to the foot of the hills, and the space between remains unoccupied:—all are silent, all are motionless, all watch for the coming of Odenathus and Zenobia, who are expected to contend for the prizes in archery.

The people did not long remain in suspense, it soon ended in wonder and disappointment; instead of their sovereigns joining them mounted on gallant steeds, attended by Zabdas and his brilliant-clad legions, they were seen walking leisurely down the street, arm in arm, he cloathed in plain purple, his head uncovered, unadorned—Zenobia robed in white, and from head to foot

wrapped in a thin transparent veil, which thrown from her face, hung in graceful folds upon her arm, and as the wind swelled and waved those folds, they clung round Odenathus, as delighting to shew husband and wife thus united: they passed the gateway and seated themselves on a bank of grass near the entrance.

Their arrival had been fixed by Victorinus as the signal to begin, and he instantly shot an arrow in the air; but vain his attempts to restore either the festive look or the joyful spirit, which, until now, had filled every bosom. Surprised, mortified, abashed, and offended they looked at Victoria: who, personally called upon by Caleb, advanced her steed to the centre of the valley; she drew an arrow from her quiver and fixed it, the arrow fell above a hundred paces distant, and the target remained unpierced. Every female rode forward in succession, each shot an arrow, but as if in compliment to Victoria, not an arrow touched the target; yet, on the

preceding day, when practising, not one had missed the mark.

Being assisted to dismount, they followed Victoria to where sat Odenathus and Zenobia, who were to adjudge the prizes, these were placed in large brazen baskets at their feet, but who could claim them?—Truly, said Zenobia, as you have all been equally skilful, you must be equally rewarded—behold the prizes and share alike. Instead of coursers' trappings, golden arrows, and silver targets, as they were led to expect, they saw shuttles, distaffs, white and stained wool, cotton, female ornaments, veils, scarfs, and materials for every sort of work, implements for painting, and instruments of music.

To prevent the accusation of partiality, continued Zenobia, ye should fold a bandage over my eyes, that impartial as Fortune I may distribute my gifts; but lest I err, and place a distaff in the hand of a general, or throw a veil over the head of a judge, pray ye


separate: let the gallant youths arrange themselves on the side of the king, and the bashful females on mine: not a female stirred, when the young men, with conscious archness, gliding away, left them standing before Zenobia.

Victoria slowly lifted up her hand, and took off her helmet, the rest followed her example—and thus released and displayed, their flowing ringlets or braided hair, restored to all a truly feminine aspect—their shining edgeless scymitars, their quivers and their bows stole softly to the ground—their sparkling vests now scarcely appeared military, and their flowing lower garments, white as drifted snow, concealed the shining spur and jewelled buskin.

Zenobia, with the pleased look of congratulation on this desired change, drew Victoria to her, in an affectionate embrace, and placed her between Odenathus and herself, on their rural throne: thus, assisted by the king, they distributed the prizes; and thus was softness and

decorum restored, and the amazonian character wholly abolished, never again to appear among the female population of Palmyra : those most forward among the men, to flatter their weakness, were now observed to be the first in glorying in the reform.

As they were leaving the valley to return to the city, the attention of Odenathus was suddenly attracted by the sight of a countenance which, though he had seen but once before, he immediately recognized : placing his hand on the shoulder of Orodes, he silently pointed it out to him.—When Orodes, in amazement exclaimed, Can it be possible ! Har-madrian, thy governor at Arethusa !—The same, said Odenathus, bring him hither.—Odenathus, resembling the master wheel in a wonderful machine of art, by suddenly stopping, caused a general halt ; and, as customary, every eye watched his motions, every ear strove to hear his words, or not hearing them, the bye-stander enquired the purport of his



neighbour, and thus was furnished with subject of debate many days.

Orodes approached, leading Harmadrian, who smiled with exultation, at being thus distinguished by royalty from among thousands; he did homage to the king and Zenobia; he raised the band of Elkanah to his forehead, but looked over the head of Valerius, his predecessor, who stood on the left of Odenathus.—Welcome, governor of Arethusa, said the king, for I would willingly not notice on this day of festivity, the irregularity of thy appearance here; but, in future, take heed, that no man leaves his government unless recalled, or obtains permission to absent himself for a time—so great the confidence I repose in thee, that for the last year I have not visited Arethusa; thou art come in happy time to inform me all I wish to know:—what is the present population of that place?—The census has not been taken, my lord, said Harmadrian, but on my return it shall be done.—Have any buildings been added

under thy government? What is the extent of the city at this time?—When I go back I will inform myself, my lord, and without delay.—And are its edifices in good repair: the temples, churches, synagogues, aqueducts, bridges, hippodrome, amphitheatre?—There is an amphitheatre there, or I was misinformed.—I was also misinformed greatly, respecting the buildings of Arethusa; but of late I have been so earnestly engaged in commercial concerns.—And what is its principal branch of commerce—what doth the town chiefly trade in?—Commodities of every kind, my lord; artificial and natural.—And the soil, of what is it composed, of chalk or sand, stone or fine loose mould as at Balbec?—I have not yet been able to discover which, my lord, but at the new moon I expect a deputation of husbandmen, and they will instruct me in these things.—Is not the river between us and you, or are you east of the river?—What river, my lord?—The Orontes, but the name of a river is

immaterial. And who are thy neighbours; I trust they do not molest thee? —No, my lord; very extensive gardens divide their mansions from mine.

Odenathus paused, his face became pale, and all who saw what passed within him, trembled at the coming storm.—When a sovereign, said Orodes, questions the governor of a province concerning his neighbours, he alludes to distinct territories—supposing Tripolis or Belus—are those cities far beyond thy jurisdiction?

Truly, said Harmadrian, I have for the last six months, been so variously employed—so greatly interested in the events passing around; the affairs at this instant going forward at Rome—how many sleepless nights have they caused me! certain that the fate of Syria depends on Rome; I came hither, it is true, to see the festivities, but since I am come, let me make known what hath of late appeared highly politic and important to the interests of Damascus.—

He stopped to cast a look at Ode-

nathus, and in that look read his fate.—The thunder of Odenathus' voice, resembled that which in the field of battle struck dread and horror through the Persian host.—Henceforth, said he, abide in Palmyra, the under-keeper of the public prison, and if not diligent in that station twelve months successively, enter its doors for life.—Valerius, return to Arethusa.

And where, at this awful period is Meonius? Wandering through the deserts of Arabia, fled over seas to distant islands?—would he were.—Then were this period not awful, but most blessed.—At this calm and peaceful hour, Meonius is concealed in the private cabinet of Odenathus: there enlightened only by the moon, he hath long waited his uncle's return; beguiling, yet lengthening time, by watching the sand of an hour-glass which stands on the table near him.—How slowly runs the sand, said he, and

shook the glass—then again watched silently, and once more impatiently seized it, again to shake, when the door suddenly opening—the glass fell from his hand: it was shivered into fragments, and the sand lay spilled at the feet of Odenathus.

I received thy letter, said the king, raising his nephew from the ground, and believe thy repentance sincere: the world may censure me, but I must forgive thee—the light of the moon fell upon the face of Meonius, and Odenathus struck with the resemblance he bore at that instant to his mother, his own beloved regretted sister, pressed him in his arms.—They were then seated.

The twelve soldiers, continued Odenathus—nay, ere I finally pardon, I must wound: now, no longer soldiers, but unarmed citizens, have, since that period, been examples of every social virtue, and never have I had cause to regret not delivering them over to death—they and I, alone, know the reason of their laying

down their arms, even Zenobia knows it not.—What thou hast done with the men of thy household who fled with thee, I am ignorant: but the rumour went through Palmyra, that disappointed in thy attempt to carry off by force Victoria from Herodian, thou in disgust fleddest the city, and to-morrow wilt be welcomed back, as having regained thy reason, and conquered thy passion.—To-morrow, then Meonius, in full audience I will send thee with a commission to follow Valerius to Arethusa, where business and absence will root out all remembrance of Victoria: thy kinsman's wife and future queen.

During the speech of Odenathus, Meonius sat half-bending to the ground, moving with the point of his sword, the spilt sand, the better to conceal the emotions with which his bosom heaved.—Gratitude to this excellent kinsman, unextinguished love for Victoria, undiminished contempt of Herodian, and fear of Zenobia, were joined to hope that his

meditated crime would for ever remain concealed.—Thou hast broken my hour-glass, remarked Odenathus rising—happily I have long since renounced paganism, or this were an ill omen.—Farewell, dear nephew, here remain this night, unseen and undisturbed, compose thy mind and heart to rest, and to-morrow accompany me to the chase.

The morning came, the king and his suite assembled in the court of the palace, and Meonius mounted on the horse given him by Herodian, joined his uncle. Odenathus received him kindly, and thereupon, every one present, who but waited to see what would be the royal reception, crowded around him with respect and adulation.

All were now prepared, yet all had long to wait the coming of Herodian.—Odenathus, impatient at the delay, desired Victorinus to go and hasten that son of idleness and pleasure; Victorinus flew to obey, but returned alone.—Instead of hastening the prince, I had to rouse

him; and he will not now leave the bath until informed, whether we propose the chase of the partridge or the wild beast: if the latter he will not accompany us. — Set forward, exclaimed Odenathus smiling, and they galloped to the outskirts of the city, where they were joined by a numerous company of hunters—horns sounded, and they soon lost sight of Palmyra.—Entering the dark shades of a wood, the toils were quickly spread, and all prepared for the attack of the wild elephant.

The chase of the partridge! mused Meonius, and this is Palmyra's future king, now only thus in name, then in truth, a king supreme of all Syria.—Oh, worthy monarch! whose limbs are scarcely acquainted with the weight of armour, who has been seen to put the crown from his brow as heavy and oppressive—whose only fatigue is suffering his slaves to change his raiment twelve times a day, each vesture, more superb than the last, and none wore twice—who

has laid aside the sword, the sceptre, and the pen, to fill Victoria's shuttle—Victoria! I also would have done thus at her command; but she never commanded me.—Women love in men valour and piety united, yet Victoria to be thus degenerate, and prefer Herodian!

Thus remained Meonius behind, curbing his impatient steed, until roused by loud and alarming cries.—An elephant, the largest, fiercest of its kind, had been driven from its retreat, and now stood before him, menacing destruction to himself and horse, when Odenathus rushed between them.—Away, Meonius! exclaimed the king aloud, thy mind otherwise occupied, thou art unfit for the chace.—Unfit for the chace! repeated Meonius, thrown off his guard, by misinterpreting the kindness of his uncle, dost take me for an Herodian? to be protected; covered?—And as he spoke, he darted violently against the horse of Odenathus, and launched his javelin full at the beast.

The hunters came up, and enticing the animal from that spot, kept him a little distance at bay. Zabdas, addressing Meonius, gently reminded him, that in hunting, the honour of throwing the first weapon belonged to the king.—Meonius, for answer, threw another.—The rear of the elephant was tremendous, yet such the power of custom, all present, regardless of personal safety, turned to look at him, who had thus twice dared to rob the king of his well-known privilege.

Odenathus, himself surprised and offended, yet sought to pass it over unnoticed, as a thoughtless and unpremeditated act, and prepared himself to attack the beast; when, how great his amazement, to behold Meonius calmly fit an arrow to his bow, and shoot at the animal.—Odenathus returned his own weapon to the hand that gave it—all around was fury and indignation, and the elephant seemed to the hunters but an entrapped deer.—Calmly addressing Zabdas, the king pointed to Meonius, saying,

Dismount him, which order had been eagerly obeyed, had not Meonius to prevent their executing it, furiously thrown himself off the horse—on whose neck he leaned, scowling defiance on all around.

Let me, my lord, said Zabdas, take charge of him back to the city, and do not let thy pleasures be thus interrupted, by insolence and rebellion. Meonius seized his only remaining javelin, and aimed it at Zabdas, when the fear of the law wrested his arm, and he vented his rage on the wounded beast: four wounds had the elephant received, and all from the hand of Meonius.

What is the greatest indignity a Palmyrenian can suffer? demanded Odenathus of his nephew. Thou wilt not answer, but thou knowest it.—Take away the horse. The command was instantly obeyed, and the criminal stood degraded and dishonoured. The chase was over, the beast was left to be killed by the hunters, and Odenathus and Zabdas rode slowly towards the city, the latter often

looking back at Meonius, who, surrounded by the king's friends and attendants, headed by Victorinus, was compelled to follow, though he endeavoured to escape.

A private consultation was instantly held beneath the roof of Odenathus, and not two of the many summoned, agreed in their advice with respect to the disposal of Meonius. Banish him, said Zenobia, not from Palmyra alone, but the empire; give him the fortune to which a nephew of thine is entitled, and send him to Italy, where our allies will never lose sight of him, and thus shall we be freed from hourly discontent and fear.—Six months rigorous military confinement in Adrian's tower, remarked Zabdas, might be of more effectual service.—I counsel kind and gentle remonstrances, said Antiochus.—Give him liberty, cried Herodian.—Give him death, muttered Elkanah.

Odenathus arose: I have determined, he said, and the consultation was at an end. The next day was a day of general

audience, and beneath the sublime and glorious dome where it was held, there assembled unusually early the different deputations from the people which filled the space below: to the right were arranged the heads of the army, the law, and each religious order; and to the left, the different ambassadors from foreign powers, with such native Syrians as had filled the office of governor of towns and provinces. The senators of Palmyra took their places at the west end of the hall, and at the east a spacious flight of steps led to three distinct thrones. On the right hand of Odenathus sat Zenobia, and on his left Herodian; at their feet, on footstools, were seen the three royal children, Hemonianus, Timolaus, and Vaballathus, thus from their birth exposed for a few moments, on the monthly day of audience, to the view of the people.

All were prepared to expect an interesting ceremony, the nature of which was not generally known, when Victor-

rinus entered at the head of a company of soldiers guarding Meonius, his sullen eyes fixed on the ground ; as he walked forward, he gathered the folds of his robe together, and with majestic calmness, threw them over his shoulder : never had the manly beauty of Meonius appeared to more advantage, for he now looked not the ferocious surly rebel, but a captive monarch.

Odenathus cast his eyes upon him with tender indulgence; Nephew, he said, our dispute was public, I would wish our reconciliation to be the same:—approach. But Meonius stirred not.—Meonius ! exclaimed Herodian, extending his hand.—If thou dost persist in not yielding to the kings, said Zenobia, thou canst not refuse to pay thy court to me.

Herodian, conceiving himself justified by these words of the queen, rushed from the throne, and throwing his purple robe playfully around Meonius, forced him forward. They ascended a few steps, when pressed to proceed by the whis-

pering Herodian, How can I reach my uncle's throne, demanded he aloud, impeded by these? and he pointed to the children on the footstools. There was an ambiguity in these words that did not pass unnoticed by Elkanah or Zenobia; the penetration of the one, and the acute maternal feelings of the other, made them feel it.

Thou canst reach thy hand thus over the heads of these pretty innocents, returned Herodian, without disturbing them.—True, replied Meonius, sarcastically; I can thus *over-reach*.—He is thy sovereign, whispered Herodian; where is thy knee?—If I kneel thus situated, answered Meonius, it will seem not to my royal uncle, but to the babies of the queen.—Zenobia rose, and summoning her women who stood near the throne, by a sign, desired them to remove the infants; they were borne away, and Zenobia followed.

Meonius then prostrated himself, which Odenathus having suffered, raised

him, saying, Be the past all forgotten. And now hasten, dear nephew, to Arethusa, with those dispatches I gave thee for Valerius, nor quit that place until my arrival. I shall be with thee in three days, and from thence we will proceed together to Larissa, when no longer a desponding lover, thou wilt prove thyself to the world an expert statesman. Meonius, as if none were present except the king and Herodian, descended from the throne, and throwing his robe over the contrary shoulder, with lofty step and head erect, quitted the hall. Herodian, happy to escape from business, offered to attend him part of his journey,—the doors were closed, and Odenathus entered on public business.

The ensuing morn, the king, repairing to the room where his family was assembled, abruptly addressed Herodian: Wilt thou, my son, accompany me to Larissa?—Most willingly, my father, replied the youth, starting up, when, feeling his hand pressed by Victoria, he

added; but I cannot go.—Most willingly thou canst not go! repeated Odenathus, with more than usual cheerfulness, and stepping between Victoria and his son, he, with gentle force, parted their hands: thus, for three days, I divorce you.—Victoria, continued he, canst thou with truth assert, that Herodian did not spin and weave the robe he now wears?

Will thy stay at Larissa be long? asked Zenobia. Why go thither thyself? Cannot Valerius execute thy will at that place?—No, replied Odenathus; his presence is at this time essential at Arethusa, which went to confusion under the wise administration of Harmadrian.—Thy decision in the choice of governors will be never again disputed, remarked Antiochus, advancing.—Could not my father go to Larissa, instead of thee? enquired Zenobia.—And unwillingly be taken from the superintendence of the triumphal arch now building in honour of thee!—Zenobia pointed in silence to Elkanah, who was standing at a window, overlook-

ing one of the public squares. Odenathus shook his head, and stooping, replied, He is not universally approved of, and were he, men of our faith are unfit to manage even the civil concerns of those of other persuasions.—And what are these concerns that thus at this time call thee away? asked Zenobia. This appears to me some sudden design not well reflected on: tell me, Odenathus, that if possible I may object to, and prevent it.—A few words will inform thee all, replied the king. I have discovered that ambition, more than love, is the cause of Meonius' unhappy turn of mind, and without delay, it is my fixed will to gratify that ambition, by putting him in possession of power and independence.

Thou art resolved? asked Zenobia. Thou art, I see it; then I say no more, but must again enquire, can no other than thyself execute thy will — Victorinus, Zabdas, Orodes?—No other shall deprive me of the pleasure of executing it myself.—And how wilt thou go thither?

—On horseback ; and there being no town between this and Germanica, we shall halt the first night at the tent of one of the guardians of the desert.—And who accompanies thee ?—I ! exclaimed a voice ; they looked at him who spoke— it was Marcus Terentius, the captain of the guard that day in the anti-chamber.—Nay, my friend, replied Odenathus, thou must not leave thy company.—I go with thee, said Terentius.—Here remain, returned the king, under the orders of Zabdas ; Balista and three soldiers only shall attend us.

Terentius stepped forward ; his appearance was menacing : May the gods, he cried—the solemn invocation was checked, and he more calmly added, Though not pronounced, the gods, who know my thoughts, are witnesses of my oath. Since thou lettest fall the civic crown on my head, have I ever left thy side ? Is not my post the threshold of thy chamber ? Did I ever leave thee in battle ? When encamped, was not thy feet my

pillow? Wherever thou goest, I go; at whatever place thou art stationed, I am stationed. I am thy shadow, and will not leave thee.—Thou shalt not leave him, returned Zenobia; nay, Terentius, I commit thy king to thy care, and oh! bring him back in safety!

Odenathus, seating himself between Zenobia and Septimia, said, Thou must be chidden for this unusual timidity, at which I greatly marvel: What or who canst thou fear? Do I not thrice yearly take a circuit of the empire? and this will be but an absence of ten days. Superstition is most unworthy of thee, Zenobia.—I condemn myself more than thou canst have the heart to do, she replied, for it is ever the sign of a weak and unstable mind; but, Odenathus, should any danger befall thee—How many who have escaped in a thousand battles, have fallen victims to the most trifling accident! Thy sand of life is but half run; should a rude hand shake thy glass——She paused, horror-struck at

the effect of her words unconsciously spoken; the pale face of Odenathus sank upon her shoulder. Who now is superstitious? who now is wholly overcome by emotions not to be described?

Hast thou been in my cabinet? he asked; and when he saw wonder in her countenance, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, again in imagination beholding the wild and ghastly look of Meonius, the shivered glass, the spilt sand.

Fearful that Zenobia would penetrate the cause of the alarming change in his manner, and ashamed of his own weakness, he rose with alacrity, promising to return within ten days.—And, beside Balista, said Zenobia, take with thee a faithful guard.—He takes with him my company, exclaimed Terentius; a hundred men.—Odenathus looked surprised. Which is king? he asked. Thou, or thy private journies would not require a centurion's guard. I command thee to remain in Palmyra.—Chains and imprisonment shall alone detain me, replied

Marcus; thou mayest prevent my company attending thy journey, but thou canst not me, by my civic crown privileged to go where I will.—Thy civic crown hath made thee mad, said Odenathus, turning away.

Blessed be the hour I saved the life of that man! cried Zenobia, as she watched him departing.—Thy weakness is most unpardonable, returned Odenathus; yet, as he took and received a farewell embrace, his exceeded hers.—Stay, Odenathus, one moment more—but one; and she raised the covering from a couch beside her, where lay their sleeping infant boys.—Do not wake them, he said, and softly taking each alternately in his arms, he kissed and blessed them.

Adieu, *Andromache*! he cried, and beckoned to Herodian.

For the sake of these children, for mine, Odenathus, thou wilt be careful of thyself; thou wilt shun danger, heats, cold, the night air.—This to a hunter, a soldier, and from an Amazonian queen?

—When an amazon, she replied, I was not a mother; and, but for this last born child, thou shouldst not go without me. —Still, as she spoke, she followed his steps, and when reached the anti-chamber found herself alone with him—Odenathus! next to God beloved, thou wilt soon return!—He clasped her to his throbbing bosom, he long held her to that bosom, they then parted, never more to meet.

Be still ye winds of heaven! Oh blow not thus wildly, or how may the voice of the distressed traveller be heard? —grateful is the sound of a human voice to fellow travellers.—Rise, O moon, to benefit the weary pilgrim and tired horseman; how great the dangers thy light may enable him to escape—the concealed robber, the lurking Arab, the couching beast of prey, and the sunken pit; the wilderness abounds with such.—Ye

guardians of the desert, haste and put up the watch-lights, or the storm approaching may not suffer you.

Would it were morning, said one, but not a morning like the past: a red and inflamed sky, succeeded by one grey expanse of horror. — Since sun-set, the jackalls have not ceased their yelp, nor the wolves their howl. — I have numbered fourteen flocks of ostriches passing westward, and more than one drove of antelopes have taken refuge within our inclosure: would that a troop of pelicans with pouches well stored with wine came as often. — The storm is coming. — It is not the storm above our heads I fear, replied the other, but that beneath our feet; I trust our rock is part of the firm world, or this night will tear it from its foundation. They lit their torches, and ascended the winding steps on the outside of the watch-tower, and there fixed the burning signals of safety. Oh, happy the wandering traveller who

shall discern them from afar, and by this blessed guide, bend this way his bewildered steps !

Scarcely a night passes but the guardians of the desert are visited by such, who, as they cross the threshold of security, call down a blessing on the name of Odenathus, the projector of these watch-towers, which diverging from Palmyra for leagues on every side, form a brilliant star.—But on this night, winds, lightning, thunder, and rising sands appear conspiring to render all precaution fruitless—happy the man who hath not yet quitted shelter.—Oh, if thou hast, turn back, nor desperately strive this night to reach thy destination ; turn back, or the tiger will not even leave thee a grave of sand.

Having fixed and secured their torches, the men descended, and as they looked up to see that all was safe, a distant cry struck upon their ear : it is one of the pelicans we invoked, said they, but on hearing it again, they answered by loud

shouts, and snatching their torches from the table of clay in which they were stuck, hastened forth—Make it known where thou art, cried one, that thy voice may direct us, for we cannot discern thee: they listened and heard a sound, but whether human or not could not distinguish —guided, however, by it, they thrust forward their torches, if a wild beast to scare it away, and walked on groping, until the foremost seized an outstretched hand.

I have thee, said he, and thine is not the hand of a lynx, and now walk boldly on; there are no pits between this spot and us; all is level ground to the foot of our rock; a bridle on thy arm, and a horse following! hast thou been robbed? cold and wet and trembling; but come we will soon cheer thee.—When they regained the rock and entered their solitary room, one of the men returned to place the horse under shelter and give him provender, whilst the other attended to their guest: having heaped faggots on

the fire, and set provisions on the table, he went down into a cave, cut in the rock, to fetch wine, where he was soon joined by the first—here, said he, take him up this rib of buffaloe and camel powder, that and the half of the blue partridge we left, and a bowl of sour milk will make him sleep:—he hath lost his speech, whispered the latter, I have put many questions, but could gain no answer—his features are most ghastly and horrible, and methinks there is blood upon them; would it were morning, that he and the storm might leave us!

They ascended from the cave to the room where they had left the stranger and found it empty; they ran to the tent at the foot of the rock, where they had placed the horse; it was no longer there; they shouted aloud, no answer was returned. Amazed and terrified they ran back to their room—Was it an apparition? asked one—the spirit of the desert, the ghost of the tempest?—A madman rather, replied his fellow, thus to rush on

certain death, for he cannot outlive the hurricane of this night.

And yet he did outlive it—the hurricane came on, he saw it not, the lightning killed the horse he rode, he missed him not; often did his feet stumble; the treacherous ground often give way beneath him; pits received him; broken boughs fell upon his naked head; a lion ran by him dragging his strangled prey to his lioness, and he passed the rocky den where lay the dam and whelps; he left the Arab fire of hospitality, and walked on unconscious of all: when meeting a rock across his path, he did not skirt the foot thereof, but clambered over it, assisted by one hand alone; his right arm being wrapped closely in his mantle; his belt containing gold and jewels burst as he tore through a thicket of brambles, and gems and gold lay scattered on the sand. Many travellers perished on this night of horrors, yet this traveller escaped every danger: as if storms and hurricanes had been his pro-

per elements, this man survived all peril, wholly unconscious he had met with any.

By dawn he had reached the brink of a river, when, neither looking to the right nor to the left, he walked into it, and only when out of his depth, instinct appeared to direct him to swim; he had crossed it, and ascended the bank to continue his wild and trackless career, when stopped by two sentinels who had long been watching him.—What, and who art thou? they asked, and why have swam the river when close at thy right was a bridge; thou art silent; then are there those at hand who will compel thee to speak: and they hurried him forward to the gate of a city where was assembled a concourse of people, to whom the sentinels delivered him, stating their belief that he was a spy.

All crowded around the stranger, none an instant hesitated.—It is! exclaimed they, it is himself! Meonius, the nephew of Odenathus our king! The chief magistrate advanced, To see thee thus, my

lord, alone and unattended, is most marvellous ; neither did we expect thee thus soon, and I should almost doubt thou wert Meonius, had not I, as well as hundreds here, often seen thee in Palmyra — Receive, then that welcome which becomes us to give, thou to receive—welcome to Larissa, Meonius, Prince of Antiochenia, for such, as doubtless thou well knowest is thy new title ; four days since, thy kinsmen Odenathus and Herodian left us for Arethusa ; a few hours only could they bless us with their presence, and in those few hours raised us from a small dependent province to a free and happy principality, of which thou art the head.

The secretary of the senate next advanced, saying, here is thy charter, my lord, and he read—To our beloved kinsman Celsus Meonius life and happiness ; having concluded the roll, he added, thus is secured to thee and thy heirs, the dominion of a rich, a flourishing and happy territory, and to us the nephew of our

excellent king. — Welcome, Meonius prince of Antiochenia, whose crown and purple is already prepared, welcome in the name of Odenathus and Herodian !

Speak on thou worthy citizens of Larissa, speak on, but never look for a reply—for never shall the sound of the voice of him you address be again heard. Meonius pointed to a fountain within the porch gate, his wishes were understood, and he was led thither—he sat down, his head drooping on the shoulder of him by whom he was supported, again he raised it, and leaning back rested it against one of the marble figures, representing Mercury, which adorned the fountain : himself as cold, as pale, as beautiful.—He faints, they cried, and ran to fetch a vase, they raised water to his lips, but he put it away with his hand : the female who held it, placing the vessel on the ground, knelt, watching his suffering countenance, when all around, now truly alarmed, began to fear he had been attacked and wounded by the robbers of the desert.

The treasurer of the Temple of Jupiter now approached, bearing the diadem and purple; the latter was thrown gently across his left shoulder, the crown was placed on a cushion at his feet, and the charter unrolled and held before him, in which the secretary with officious pleasure, pointed out the names of Odenathus and Herodian.

Once more the eyes of Meonius opened, and that look, which at once took in the charter, the crown, and the names of his kinsmen was his last; his lips for the first time were unclosed, a deep groan of suffering and anguish was heard, and a stream of blood gushed from his mouth:—he drew his right arm from beneath his mantle, as if to use that hand, but scarcely a hand remained, all to the elbow appeared one ghastly wound—he slowly lifted up his left, the purple they had thrown over him concealed his design, and ere the surrounding spectators were aware that a blow was meditated, the blow was struck! before the


eyes of all, yet not an eye witnessed the deed, Meonius drove his dagger deep into his heart—Meonius is no more, but as yet his body is entire, except that tongue which hired the murderers, except that hand which the night before plunged the same dagger through the heart of Odenathus.

Three moments more, and not a limb of Meonius but is separated from the trunk; cut, mangled, thrown to the dogs, and the vultures of the air.—The terror-struck inhabitants of Larissa, but saw the fatal stroke, when their attention was called off to the gateway.—Like the waves of a raging sea, twelve horsemen sword in hand, headed by one of dreadful wrath, rushed into the city, and sprang to the fountain where lay the body of Meonius—they knew not, they regarded not whether he were dead or living—not a sword but sunk deep in his quivering flesh—dragged from the bench, dashed to the earth, trampled beneath the horses' feet—his severed limbs hurled into the

air, fell in bleeding fragments, and his blood mingling with the waters of the fountain flowed through the streets of Larissa."

Enquire not, speak not, cried Zabdas, with the stern authority of an avenging angel—but all who will follow us, and turning, he galloped back through the gateway attended by the twelve soldiers.—Soldiers once again, for these are the repentant twelve, who joining hands over the sleeping head of Odenathus, swore to defend or revenge him.

Larissa was nearly emptied of its citizens, all who had horses, mounted and followed Zabdas, while those on foot speedily pursued.—On the other side the Orontes, they were joined by Valerius, Balista, Orodes, and several troop of horse from Arethusa, and all uniting, formed a powerful body; which, being again divided into separate companies, took different roads to continue the mournful search.—Those on foot penetrated into places where the horse could not



come, whilst the horse furiously scoured the country around; every pit, every thicket, and crevice of the rock between Larissa and Arethusa was examined, and Zabdas had expressed his fear that the murdered bodies had been thrown into the river, when a loud shout was heard, and a general halt commanded; they hastened to the man who beckoned, and who was standing at the entrance of a cluster of fir trees skirting a deep sandy pit, his eyes fixed on objects lying stretched at his feet.

All gathered around the spot.—O ye gods! exclaimed Orodes, and kneeling, he hid his face in his hands.—Zabdas, falling to the earth, covered his head with dust; the twelve men broke into bitter lamentations, mingled with self-accusation, whilst the rest proceeded to examine what was before them. Uppermost lay a body, not at first recognized, for breast, face, and arms, were miserably hacked, the wrists were severed, and the head deeply wounded; Zabdas was re-

ferred to, but ere he looked, in one word could decide who it was—It can be no other than Terentius, and laying his hand upon the stabbed bosom, Oh Marcus, I envy thee this death! Having removed the body of Terentius, two others were disclosed to view, the son clasped in his father's arms, and so calm, so noble the pale features of Odenathus, so beauteous those of Herodian; they appeared as reposing in sleep, their faces, breasts, and limbs cemented by blood. Divide them not, said Valerius, and he dropped over both his mantle; then, by his directions, the soldiers cut down boughs of trees, and constructed a litter.

The litter was scarcely completed, and the bodies laid thereon, than a party of horse returned with three men prisoners, whom they had found concealed among the neighbouring rocks; Caleb instantly recognized them for servants of Meonius, they were dragged forward, and in the presence of all made a full confession.

Was the deed committed on this

spot? asked Zabdas, or were the bodies brought hither?—Against yon tree, said one, stood the king, whose horse we shot under him, the moment that Balista and his men had disappeared; Odenathus sent them onward to Arethusa to prepare his coming, and followed, accompanied only by his son and Marcus, who, though he was also commanded to ride forward, refused. We, with our master Meonius, were seven; Herodian, lingering behind on this spot to shoot an ostrich, was stabbed an easy prey, and died without a struggle, but three of our number fell by the hand of Odenathus, turning to see whether his son was safe, when Meonius drew his dagger, and with his left hand raised, (for Terentius had nearly stricken off his right,) approached behind his uncle. Odenathus no sooner beheld lying, where late it lay, the body of his son, than he ran, and fell, and took it in his arms. We all bear the marks of Terentius' sword, his last thrust was at the open mouth of

Meonius, and I stood ankle deep in Marcus' blood ere these could cut the sinews of his legs—he died in the act of covering the head of Odenathus with the skirt of his mantle.

And thou diest in the act of recounting thy deeds, said a soldier, and with a blow of his sword laid him dead at his feet; the other two were at the same instant dispatched by the rest, and their headless bodies thrown into the sandy pit.

The people of Larissa returned thither in sorrow and despair, those of Arethusa were conducted back by the afflicted Valerius, and Zabdas, Orodes, and Balista took charge of the sacred remains of Odenathus and Herodian to Palmyra.

Nay, Septimia, indulge not thus thy grandson, said Victoria, or verily the queen and I will send thee and him to

Armenian Zaantha, there to be nurtured ; was Zenobia ever thus indulged, or thou indulgent ?— You may send us to Zaantha, replied Septimia, but you cannot suppress nature, and nature herself teaches an over-abundant fondness between beings where the disproportion of age is so widely different ; with mother and child all is new, progressive, but with grand-children we begin life again : and that same period of life, surpassing all others, so dear to the heart, is thus actually restored. Thou smilest, Victoria, scarcely can I convince myself at times that this child is not my daughter when at that age, and more than once have called him Zenobia ; may he live to instruct her in my present feelings !

Victoria, throwing aside the book she had been reading, observed that Odenathus at parting had called them Andromaches, but Andromache would not have been thus patient had her husband gone a ten days' journey : even from the walls she had him ever in her sight. Supposing then, said Septimia, that to

learn patience thou callest thyself Penelope, and come and assist me at this frame.—To weave or to unweave? asked Victoria; rising hastily she went to the windows, then returned, and hung over Zenobia's frame, walked to Sabina and Mariam, who had the younger children on their laps, sported gaily, nay, wildly with the little innocents, and still restless and agitated, unable to settle to any serious employment, wandered into the garden. Shortly after she returned with a collection of flowers and weeds, with which, having broken three porcelain vases, deranged several, and flooded the tables with water, she ornamented the remainder. Again she went to the windows, and after some time watching the court below, left the room in gloomy silence, and repaired to her own apartments.

Thou, Zenobia, hast more fortitude than Victoria, remarked Septimia.—Have I, my mother? and raising her pallid countenance and dejected eyes,

softly quitted her work, and leaned back on the couch.—Are the baths prepared, and changes of raiment, and refreshments ever held in readiness for their return? asked Zenobia of her attendants.—Go and watch that nothing may be wanting; they obeyed.—I felt none of this oppression; my mother, when he went to Armenia, to Egypt, to Greece. The oppression I feel is not to be told thee.—Septimia made no reply, and Zenobia resumed her work.—Uninterrupted silence followed for more than an hour,—O God! exclaimed Zenobia; Septimia looked up affrighted; my mother, do not be alarmed, do not blame me, but I can no longer bear it, this is the eleventh day, speak to my father, summon Zabdas, let messengers be sent to meet them—they might have returned ere this—never till now did Odenathus break his promise with me, this conduct is most unkind, I know not what I fear, but I fear all.

Septimia fixed her eyes on the convulsed features of Zenobia, she laid

down her implements of work, and still watching her daughter, went towards the door to seek Antiochus ; but had not reached it ere Antiochus entered. —Where is the queen ? he cried, Zenobia rushed forward and fell in his arms ; he strained her to his bosom, and, for the first time, wept over her.—Are they returned ? she cried, where, oh where is he ? Thou dost not answer me ; thou dost not speak ; tears ! Oh, my father ! where is Odenathus ?—She paused, she looked stedfastly in his face, and wildly repulsing him, would have rushed from the apartment, when he forcibly detained her ; holding her thus with one hand, he pointed with the other to the eldest boy, saying, There is now our king.—Alas ! force was no longer necessary to detain Zenobia : he resigned her senseless form to the care of his wife, and hastened to the house of Elkanah, where were already assembled the nobles of Palmyra.

Is it universally known ? asked Antiochus entering.—No ; replied Elkanah,

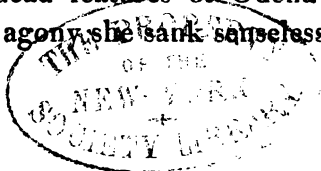
nor is it necessary, for it must be gradually told to the people; my advice is, not to let the bodies be brought in until night.—Thy advice, said Caleb, comes too late: behold! and he pointed down the street to a concourse hastening to meet the procession of death.—Hark! Oh, if the black spirit of Meonius could hear that shriek! were he but alive to witness this sight! Ye gracious heavens what, what shall be done to calm their minds?

But one hope remains, said Antiochus, let them be told, that the queen is as yet not wholly informed of the truth; and that her life, as I fear it doth, depends on her hearing the circumstances, after long and due preparation. This counsel was adopted, and the senators quitting the house, spread themselves through every part of the city. The decreasing tempest having spent itself, dies away in murmuring breezes, so were hushed shrieks and exclamations; but though the streets were the same hour

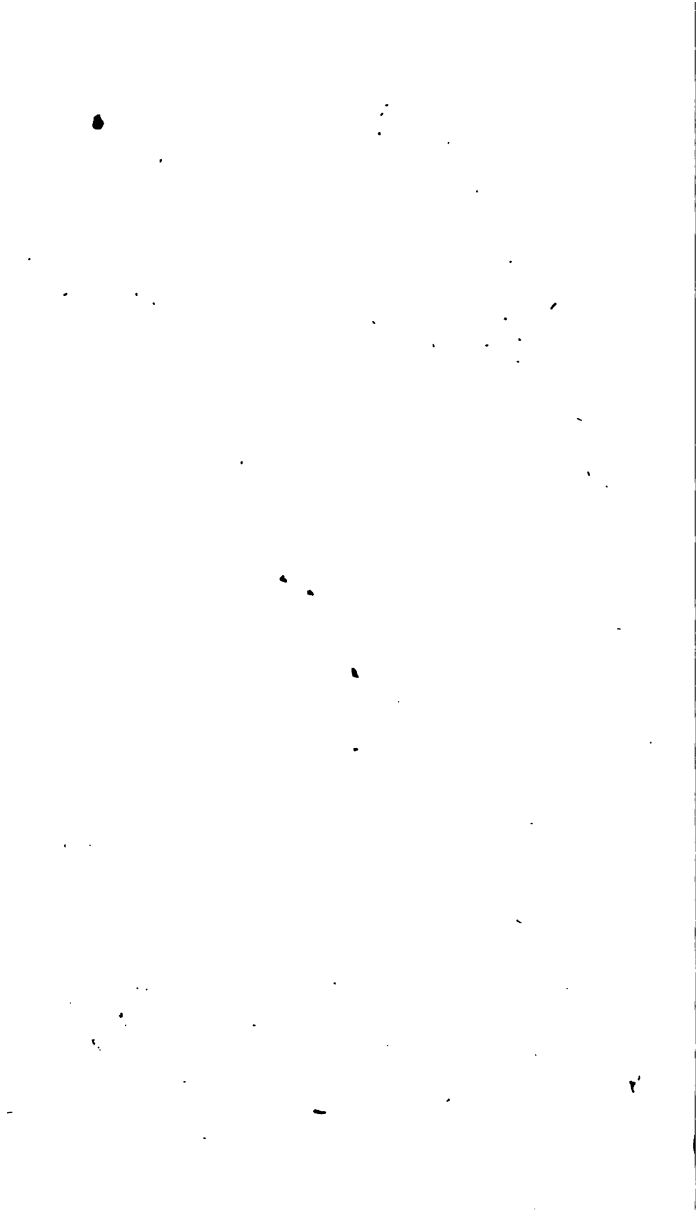
cleared, every habitation was filled with prostrate, fainting, or weeping mourners. . . . Three days were for ever lost in the memory of Zenobia, and for three days, Doth she yet live? was the hourly enquiry throughout Palmyra. When able to leave the couch of sickness and of sorrow, she suffered herself to be conducted between Antiochus and Septimia to the hall of audience, where so lately Odenathus, Herodian, and herself had graced its thrones: the thrones were now empty, but in the centre of the hall, on a platform, covered with black drapery— Her wish was understood, and the drapery withdrawn. !

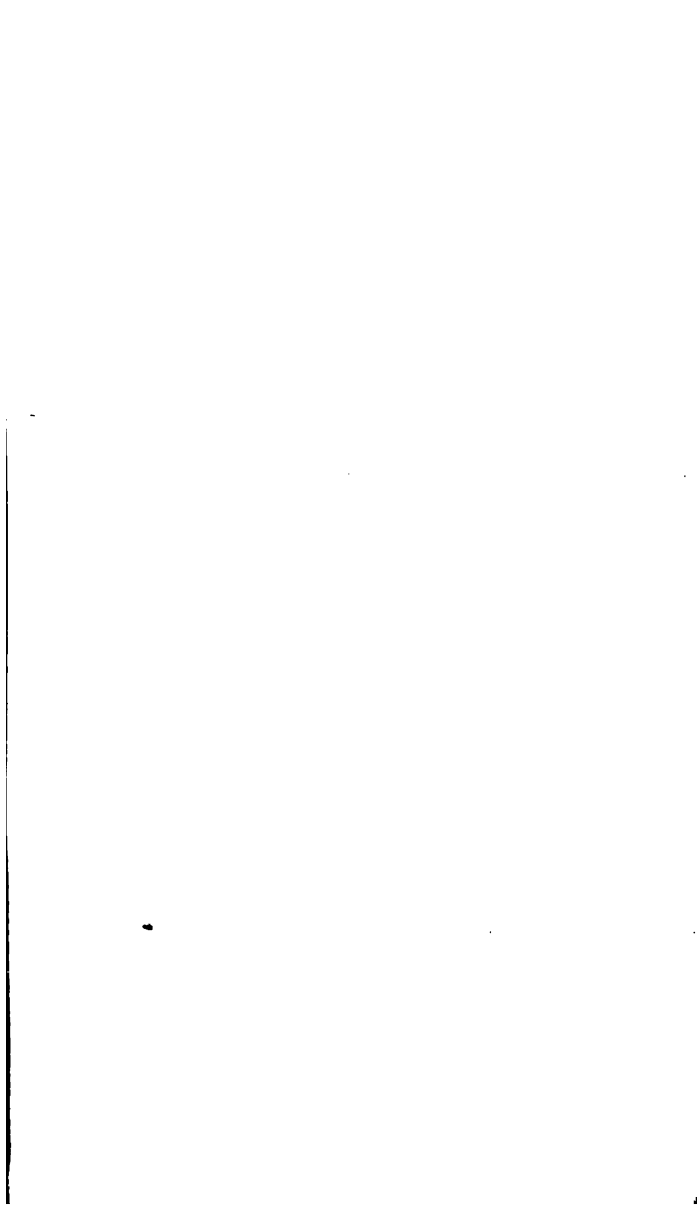
This third embalmed body is that of Terentius the centurion, my child, said her father, in the hope of turning the course of her passions, and his hope succeeded: Noble Marcus! added Antiochus, he died defending his kings, and at their feet shall be interred. A lesser grief softened the heart, which the moment before was hardening with despair and frenzy;

not a tear was shed until she looked upon Terentius, and then a flood of tears embalmed his wounded form; from his her eyes wandered to the still lovely face of Herodian: but the next look!—when she beheld the dead features of Odenathus!—in silent agony she sank senseless on his bosom.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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